

SENTIMENTAL LETTERS

ON

I T A L Y;

WRITTEN IN FRENCH

BY PRESIDENT DUPATY,
IN 1785.

PUBLISHED AT ROME IN 1788,

AND

TRANSLATED THE SAME YEAR

BY J. POVOLERI, AT PARIS.

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VOL. II.  
~~~~~

High foars the Genius; and informs the Page
With Music, Image, Sentiment, and Thought,
Never to die—the Treasure of Mankind.

THOMSON,

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR THE TRANSLATOR BY J. CROWDER;

AND

SOLD BY J. BEW, PATER-NOSTER-ROW.

M,DCC,LXXXIX.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1891

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RECEIVED

NOV 18 1891

ERRATA

- Vol. II. p. 101. 18. for "proclum" read "Proclum".
Vol. II. p. 147. for "Lect. Cl. A. Lect. NOVIR."
154. for "Lect. Cl. read "Lect."
158. for "Lect. Cl. read "C."
164. for "Lect. Cl. read "Cl."
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London's History of Charles V. by M. de la

a writer capable of the original; M. de la
flair's charming productions, of Melancton,
that recalls Racine to our minds; and of Phil-

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Marmontel's Belshazzar, which eloquently in-

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monarch, and the great art to have pity on the

king; L'Abbe Delille's poem on English

ITALY.

Robert's elegant canvas of the mountains of the

year, which will for ever charm all lovers of

nature and poetry; St. Lambert's poem of the

stones, in which the various regions really exist;

LETTER LXVI.

kingdom and empire; M. de la

ROME.

I WENT to a bookseller this morning,

and found several of our best modern

works in his shop.—The noble portrait of na-

ture, *en grand*, drawn by Buffon; M. Bailly's

work on ancient and modern astronomy, where

science and genius have entrusted to eloquence

the secrets of the sun; M. Gaillard's sensible

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Vol. II. **B** **bertson's**

bertson's History of Charles V, by M. Suard, a writer capable of the original; M. de la Harpe's charming productions, of Melanie, that recalls Racine to our minds; and of Philoctetes, that restores Sophocles to the world; Marmontel's Belisarius, which eloquently instructs the subject to pity the painful task of a monarch, and the monarch to have pity on the subject; L'Abbe Delille's poem on English gardens, written in the French taste; M. Roucher's elegant cantos of the months of the year, which will for ever charm all lovers of nature and poetry; St. Lambert's poem of the seasons, in which the seasons actually exist; and, to close all, that great present to states, kingdoms and empires; *M. Necker's Administration of Finances.*

I have seen the celebrated professor of mathematics, Le Pere Jacquier, so deservedly renowned for his genius, his knowledge, and his character. If you wish to be well received by him, and by the rest of the learned in Europe, present him a letter of recommendation from the secretary of the sciences, the illustrious Marquis de Condorcet. I saw here, at the

bottom

bottom of the Marquis's portrait, the following inscription: which by the apposite antithesis of *faithful* secretary, and *indiscreet* confident of the academy, forms a happy allusion to his divulging the secrets of the sciences all over Europe; nor is it any flattery to call him the model of a wise man.

D'un sage voici le modèle,
En même tems que le portrait.
La Verité, jamais, eut elle
De secretaire plus fidèle,
Et de confident moins discret ?

There are many persons who envy Le Pere Jacquier. Luckily he deserves it. What, then, is envy? It is an impatience, in little minds, for superiority; in great ones, for equality.

One word only about the academy of the Arcadians—it is a *name*.

LETTERS ON ITALY.

LETTER LXVII.

ROME.

I HAD been invited to see a picture of Guercino, representing Herminia's sudden arrival at the shepherd's cottage. I went to see it: I was curious to compare the production of Guercino with that of Tasso—How different the one from the other! Read Tasso first.—Herminia, agitated by terror and love, wandered far into a forest; overcome by sorrow and fatigue, she stops and falls asleep.—The chirping of the birds at break of day awakes her; she listens, and she weeps; on a sudden some melodious plaintive sounds reach her attentive ear, and penetrate her soul. They are the sounds of pastoral reeds and rural song. Her tears cease to flow; she rises, and advances slowly through the trees, towards the pastoral reeds and rural song. She perceives, in the midst of a natural grove, an old man sitting under a plane, with his flock by his side, and weaving an osier-basket, while

two young shepherds, and a shepherdess, are singing together, before their father, a rustic song. At the sight of a helmet, of armour, and a warrior, the shepherds are frightened, and cease their concert; but Herminia instantly pulls off her helmet, and the shepherds are no longer afraid. Herminia draws near them, and with a benevolent smile encourages them to proceed. "Go on, says she, happy family, shepherds beloved by heaven, continue your industrious work, and your music. These arms, be assured, do not come here with an intent to cause the least alarm amongst you; I do not come to interrupt either your works or your songs."—A tear then falls from Herminia's beautiful eyes on her fair bosom.

Look now at Guercino's picture. Herminia is in a forest; her helmet is taken off: two little children, who were about twenty steps from her, perceive her, and run away quite frightened; the third hides himself in the arms of the old man, who sits under a tree; at some distance the old shepherd's wife, who was drawing water from a well, suddenly stops, and with an air of astonishment looks at the war-

rior.—Ridiculous composition ! Herminia has uncovered her head, and these shepherds are afraid ! Herminia was attracted to that place by rustic reeds and pastoral songs, and the shepherds are but little children ! In short, this charming rural spot is a grove, and there is a well in it !—What is become of the rivulet ?

But *connoisseurs* will say—Look at that style of colouring ! How strikingly true it is ! The tints, how harmoniously blended ! The *chiar-oscuro* how judiciously managed !—Is it the question of painting in this case ?—I was asking of the painter a poem. —O the poet's charming idea ! Herminia has taken off her helmet, not with a premeditated design, but by pure instinct, by a kind of natural coquetry ; she is in love ; she is unhappy ; she is among shepherds, 'tis true ;—but she is a woman.

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LETTER LXVIII.

ROME.

POLIDORE, a young sculptor of Athens, had seen the magnificence of the Eliau games. He had beheld exposed, round the Stadium, the statues of heroes and gods, before the eyes of all Greece. He had seen the infatuated youth in raptures with the charms of Praxiteles' Venus, and the countenance of a young beauty modestly blushing before Termisander's Mercury: in the looks of a disciple of Socrates, he could perceive his religious thoughts awed into respect, and immoveably fixed on the Jupiter of Phidias. Love of glory, and jealousy, its inseparable companion, which real talents commonly engender, soon invaded Polidore's aspiring soul. He quits the splendid field, and reaches the sea. There, rapt in his pensive thoughts, he hears not the roaring surges dashing against the shore: he hears only the voice of renown, which publishes all over the world, and immortalizes the names of his

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rivals.—By heaven! she shall publish mine too, exclaimed the young artist; she shall be *forced* to publish it; I too will stand foremost in the line of glory; at my appearance too, the people enchanted shall cry out—*there he is!* My rivals shall hear in their turn my name with emotions of envy. The proud, haughty look of men in power, shall fall less disdainfully on me; the most scornful beauties shall no longer neglect Polidore; and on me shall be fixed with greater complacency, the eyes of my beloved Ephira. Oh! could I but conceive the design of a production, surpassing those that have been hitherto attempted by the Grecian chissel!

Let me try to unite in one work the true, the beautiful, and the sublime; in order to form this happy assemblage, I will chuse my model amongst the gods; the forms, from ideal beauty; the charms, from the state between youth and manhood; the action, from amongst those that possess but a moderate expression, where the true style admits the beautiful, and the beautiful does not exclude the true.

The

The imagination of Polidore entered the ethereal mansions, and took a survey of the whole assembly of the gods. It did not stop at Mars, nor at Mercury; it disdain'd Adonis, made a god only by Venus. I see but Apollo, said he, that can answer my purpose! none but the god of day, the mighty master of the sounding lyre, the son of Jupiter, and the conqueror of the Pythian serpent, deserves my notice. He chose Apollo.—The day is on the decline, Polidore returns home, and tries to repose. He cannot rest, his imagination is entirely filled with ideas of the statue.—There he is! exclaimed he, starting up—the god moves; he perceives the monster; he bends his bow—the monster lies weltering in his blood, and the god smiles indignantly. The arm that bent the bow is still suspended—the other is at rest.

At break of day Polidore flies to a marble block. There he lies concealed, said he; I see him (his genius perfectly shewed it to him); now must I develope him—His pupil's instruments are already at work; but the moment Polidore thinks he sees the place where the god lies, he stops his pupil's chissels, and

takes his own—Every stroke detaches, and places at his feet, part of the veil that hides Apollo from him.—The noblest and the most harmonious body, between virility and adolescence, stands confessed before him; his limbs are free from human wants and imperfections, and rise one from another. The head, however, is still concealed—but if the body is to be a godlike one, the head must certainly be that of Apollo. It is the head that is to proclaim the god of the lyre, and of day; the conqueror of the Pythian serpent. Polidore's chissel trembles as it approaches the divine head, and hesitates to animate it; but emboldened at last, no doubt, by the god himself, he gently runs the chissel over the forehead, and forthwith it proclaims the faculty of reflection; he carefully delineates the eye-brows—Behold! a look starts from Apollo, the fore-runner of the arrow!—He lightly touches the lips at last, and indignation breathes against the serpent.—Such is the Apollo of the Belvedere! There lives that marble, formed into a god, by one of those creating chissels, which by chusing, combining, or imitating nature, have surpassed it. How noble! How exquisitely fine! How
moving

moving and majestic at the same time! How his perfect body develops itself!—The eye, in gazing at it, is forced to follow the admirable line that draws it: no where can it stop.—What an artist must Polidore have been! One must reflect, that this Apollo is of marble, to think that it is the work of a man. How lucky, that time has respected this astonishing combination of the most perfect human forms! Incessantly do I come to visit Apollo; incessantly do I come to study it.—This statue is, perhaps, the master-piece of the ideal beautiful, towards which my imagination and my heart display their wings incessantly.

Polidore is a fictitious name.

LETTER LXIX.

ROME.

I HAVE been to see the Catacombs in St. Sebastian's convent. The monk, who served me as a guide, seemed a sensible man, and of a fertile imagination. After entering the first passage of that immense vault, you see, said he to me, on the right and left of that rock, the place where corpses have been piled up one over another; a hundred thousand of them are reported to have been found there: they were the bodies of martyrs.—Behold these racking instruments! those altars!——This is a marble statue of St. Sebastian, by Bernini.—These rubble stones ready to fall: such accidents happen pretty often in this dangerous subterraneous place; we are obliged, therefore, to use the greatest precaution in going forward: many unfortunate strangers have entered this awful vault, never to return. About forty years ago, a young man and his wife had the curiosity to advance pretty far, preceded by a guide and a flambeaux

flambeaux.—All on a sudden a part of the rock precipitates behind them. At night, the convent, alarmed at the guide's not appearing, look for him every where; and, passing by the Catacombs, perceive, alas! that the entrance is not shut. Lights are instantly procured, and proper persons descend to visit the place. As they advance, they find the huge stones newly sunk.—To their calling, the cries of anguish answer through the dreadful void;—but how can they remove the obstructing rock? How can they support the impending vault? How can they contrive the smallest issue? Very soon the cries become but confused and stifled groans: silence ensues at last; they listen—listen again, and nothing more is heard! They quit the dismal tomb—the guide was continuing, but I turned my ears, shuddering with horror. What a scene did my imagination draw behind that fallen rock! How dreadful their situation, when the light threatened to go out! When it actually went out for ever! When the wife saw no longer her husband! When the guide could perceive no longer his way! When darkness became to them the eternal

eternal darkness of death!—When they embraced each other in the tomb!

As we went on, the guide related to me the history of these Catacombs. He spoke with an interest, and a vivacity, that proved at once the power of imagination and religion. It was here, said he, with enthusiasm, that the pious christians, persecuted by the Cæsars, repaired in the evening to celebrate their mysteries. Old men, women, and children; the rich, the poor, all crowded hither to hold their sacred meetings. It was here, that fervent prayers, begun by a venerable pontiff, were circulating from one end of the vault to the other, and piercing through this ponderous mass, flew to the heavenly throne. How edifying! how awful! the concert of a thousand hearts, all at once at prayers! In those religious moments, the faithful oft would bring the mangled bodies of their suffering brethren, which had just experienced the cruel arm of the executioner—No interruption then in the holy assembly—no groans, no complaints, no tears—the very mothers continued to pray! One evening as they were repeating their orisons, as usual, a sudden and wide-spreading

spreading light alarms them; a troop of inexorable soldiers, who had discovered the cave, enter their peaceful abode. They dart upon the christians as wild beasts, after having surprized their prey. The victims tender their feeble necks, and the barbarians slay: a few women and children try by flight to escape their fury; the bloody villains pursue them, fire and sword in their hands: they kill, they butcher, they still look out for carnage; but the dreadful silence they have caused, seizes them, and drives them back. They quit the mansion of the dead, and seal the immense gorged tomb with rocks and ruins.—But what am I saying—I am mistaken. In vain do these rocks, covered with age, pretend to hide those precious monuments.—Piety suspects them to conceal a treasure; Piety finds them, rolls them away, enters the cave, and collects all the bones, all the dust, and all the remnants of the bodies cemented with the rock.

At a particular place, my guide stopped: I was sorry for it, for I should have been glad to throw two or three glimpses of the pale light that guided my steps, into the depth of that ancient

cient and sacred darkness. I sat down then, with my guide's permission, upon a stone, and heard his conversation, which continued in these words:—I often haunt these secret horrors, and am pleased to feel the awful emotions of the heart, at the solemn silence of the night, at the dreary effect of solitude, and at the cold image of death. It is under ground, that one should come to reflect on what passes on the earth, and on what men are doing, or pretend to do. How slight are the impressions here of the strides of armies, which make it shake; of the wheels of triumphal cars, which furrow it; and the fall of towns and empires which cover it!—I like subterraneous abodes: there the soul, quite absorbed in contemplation, disencumbered of the action of the senses, enjoys then all her sensibility; she soars to an unusual height; and it would seem that the way to heaven is actually under earth. In such scenes all human beings should try to heal the wounds of love, envy, and ingratitude. Ambition there could not resist.—It would soon be stifled.

We left the Catacombs, and I could have wished to enter them again.

LETTER

LETTER LXX.

ROME.

MICHAEL ANGELO's imagination was truly Roman.

When it fixed upon an object, it was as impossible to confine it within mediocrity, as it would be for a giant to make small steps in walking. It produced at once in the three great arts, St. Peter's church, the picture of the last judgment, and the statue of Moses. Moses is represented sitting with the tables of the law under one arm; the other rests upon a prophet's breast.

What a look! —

That august front seems only a transparent veil, which can, with difficulty, cover an immense mind.

The undulating locks of his beard astonish the beholder, as they descend, or rather flow,
down

down to his waist, and overspread it; but the first look can only seize Moses.

Such a beard does not exist in nature, I grant, but ideal beauty owns it.

The mouth, full of expression, keeps thought in the expectation of speech.

Homer, Bossuet, Michael Angelo, seemed to possess successively the same imagination.—Is it extinct?

LETTER

LETTER LXXI.

R O M E.

LA VILLA ADRIANA is an enclosure which contains about ten miles, at the foot of the mountains of Tivoli. The emperor Adrian, after having travelled for six years over the different kingdoms of the Roman empire ; that is, in other words, over the universe, had all the monuments he most admired, on account of their magnificence or glory, imitated in these gardens.

In the course of a long and agreeable walk, you meet with different entertaining objects—there you see the lyceum, here the academy ; a little farther the prytaneum ; in a plain, the portico ; on the declivity of a hill, the temple of Thessaly ; in the middle of a wood, the pacilium of Athens ; baths, libraries, naumachia, and theatres. The elysian fields lay in that direction, and the infernal regions in this. The superb palace of the emperor stood proudly

ly in the centre of the monuments, ornamented with all that architecture could do at that time to render the dwelling of the master of the world eminently grand and magnificent. There Adrian spent seven whole years, enjoying the pleasures of nature and of the fine arts, and with heart-felt satisfaction, forgetting for a while the cares of empire—there would he often relieve from the burden of a crown the head of the philosopher. By a philosophical calculation, he reduced the whole time he had lived to the space of those seven years. Never did the genius, or mighty power of the Romans, execute any thing so splendidly grand as the Villa Adriana. It was a select assemblage of ages, of arts, and of the universe.

Let imagination represent to you the moment when Adrian, in his extensive gardens of ten miles in circuit, surrounded by artists, philosophers and poets, used to say to the *beaux arts*—let the lyceum be here—the portico there—yonder the temple of Canope—in this valley shall be the elysian fields. Take your time; you shall have gold in abundance, and fifty thousand of my slaves. But, on the other hand,
how

how dreadful the moment, when the barbarians' frantic rage entered these beautiful mansions, and began to ravage them in conjunction with time.—I have still found in them the marks of age. How shall I describe the impression I received at the first aspect of this place, when a poor peasant opened to me a wooden gate, half rotten, that now shuts up its inclosure. With a sad heart, and uncertain steps, I walked quite alone for the space of three hours, through briars, wild grass, stumps of columns, and pieces of decayed walls crumbling into dust; I pierced through this deep solitude from one end to the other, and the curious mind remained unsatisfied.—Heavens! Caracalla, the Italians, and Time, have neither spared the lyceum, the portico, nor the academy! How! They have not left the least traces of them!—

I ran over again those remains that bore some resemblance to the ancient monuments; I viewed and examined them with as much earnestness and haste, as if they were not to be seen the next day; as if Caracalla were to return again to those fields in the night. What

joy

joy did my heart feel, when the prospect across the many bushes and shrubs, succeeded to unravel, under the branches of a spreading fig-tree, or the creeping ivy, the fragments of some columns!—I went forward; I rambled; I stopped—and rambled again: I was never tired of contemplating those precious ruins, of a violet hue, scattered on lawns of a light green, under an azure sky. I had a mind to visit the hundred rooms, where the prætorian guards were once lodged; a fig-tree, growing in the *puzzolana*, has penetrated under the roof of one of these rooms: it had spread one of its branches into the middle, on which the sun's rays, by insinuating themselves across the way, constantly ripened its fruit.

I heard some bees buzzing round me, when it began to grow late; the sun was approaching the horizon, when, on going pretty far over the heath, I arrived at a *ménagerie* near the temple of Jupiter, which is, every instant, falling to ruins. I rested a while under a pine-tree, and opposite to me, on a lodge where once a lion roared, a nightingale was singing. The sound of his enchanting notes seemed to
be,

be, at intervals, accompanied by a rivulet, that flowed in sweet murmurs under the verdure, I listened very attentively to the murmuring rill, to the melodious accents of the nightingale, and to the solemn silence that reigned every where else. I was enchanted ! but, at last, night entered the desert, and drove me away.

LETTER
in this marble, he is silent. Virgil, in these
epistles but a narrow station, and Agass
suppose such a name) has fairly exhibited a
moral

LETTER LXXII.

ROME.

THE best idea I can give you of the Belvedere Laocoon, is to relate the conversation which I had with a young artist on that admirable group. I had been minutely contemplating, and enjoying their inimitable charms, for almost an hour. How could M. de — assert, said I to myself, that Laocoon's death is represented in this marble as in Virgil's lines? M. de — has either not read Virgil, or not seen this marble. In Virgil, the action is successive—here, simultaneous. In Virgil, the serpents have already torn the children to pieces, when their father runs to their assistance—here, the children and the father are all assailed at once. The Laocoon of Virgil utters the most piteous groans; but in this marble, he is silent. Virgil, in short, expresses but a natural affliction, and Agassias (suppose such a name) has fairly exhibited a
moral

moral one—nay, he has done more, he has drawn courage in the midst of these two calamities, struggling against them, and repressing both. Of these two authors, Virgil is certainly the artist, and Agassias the poet. The former has composed a narrative, the latter a poem. Virgil's chief view was that of moving; and Agassias' that of pleasing. Agassias has surpassed Virgil.—

I was just finishing this parallel in my mind, and thinking of how much utility its development might be, for the instruction of young artists; and of what service to shew, in all its light, the difference that exists, in all the fine arts, between the mechanical part that copies, and the genius that composes, when my eyes happened to fall, by chance, on a young man, who was delineating *Læocöon* by my side. I found his drawing very indifferent indeed, but said nothing. What do you think of it? said he to me in Italian. You are still far from the original. I am of your opinion, and by no means satisfied with my work. I have copied this group ten times, and I never can succeed in drawing the whole: yet I copy with the

greatest fidelity, as I think. Had you copied your model with the greatest fidelity, your drawing would reflect it, as faithfully as a looking-glass; but, you may depend upon it, your copy is by no means literal; it is full of capital omissions and palpable mistakes. It is true, that one cannot reproach you with your copy's not being literal, for in fact it can never be so. In so narrow a space you can never unite all the parts of your model, not even in miniature. Many of them are but points, and you cannot lessen them: you are then obliged to chuse from among them, and suppose the rest—but you have made a bad choice; you have chosen the details that represent the body, and neglected those that represent the soul. What I see under your crayon, is but the body of an old man, disgusting on account of his age and sufferings: under the chissel of Agasias, it is chiefly the tender heart of a father, and the steady soul of a man. Thus the *Læocöon* of Agasias inspires me so forcibly with admiration, that it makes me partake of his sufferings, while yours, on the contrary, revolts and disgusts me. But is not the effect I produce more natural?—no doubt, it is; but the object
of

of the fine arts is not simply to imitate nature, but to imitate beautiful nature : not only to affect sensibility, but to affect it nobly. The common artist does not know how to select. He is apt to take, in a subject that shocks the sight, the most shocking side. Explain to me then, if you please, in what consist the genius and the intelligence that strike you most in the choice of the attitude, which is to be preferred, in such a case, by the artist. Agasias, a young man, had been directed to represent in marble the unhappy fate of Læocöon. He certainly said to himself—if I chuse the aspect under which he strikes at first, he will certainly inspire the greatest horror ; and the better the execution, the stronger the impression. Two children and an old man torn to pieces by two serpents ! Who is able to bear so horrid a sight ? I must, however, act in such a manner, that not only such a sight may be borne, but even sought after. He reflects, he meditates, consults his heart, and interrogates by turns his sensibility and his reason. “ The secret is found,” exclaimed he at last, “ the horror of the principal action must disappear, by the interest bestowed on the accessory ones. The

body of old Læocöon shall be exposed, as it ought, to the serpent's bite; but that body at least shall be perfect; under the weight of years, and of sufferings, a majestic beauty shall be seen shining at intervals: the natural pain he feels shall likewise expressively appear in his figure; but as it would shock, were it to appear quite intire, I shall retain part of it for the soul, and mix, with the outward sufferings, the feelings of a father. But these two children embarrass me: shall I shew them both dilacerated by the monsters? What a shocking monotony!—I should exceed the bounds of compassion—No, I must shew them both running at once for protection to their father, but from two different ways. The serpents shall seize them both before they can reach him; but one alone shall be their victim, and that shall be the youngest, in order to render the victim still more interesting. The other shall only be entwined in the dreadful wreaths of the hideous reptile, and the sacrifice shall seem but for a few moments retarded. I shall endeavour to render these two episodes as affecting as possible, that the horror which the father must inspire, may be still a little more dimi-

diminished by the pity which the children claim—I will endeavour, in a word, to make pity the predominant quality in this moving catastrophe."

Look now, said I to the young man, how well Agasias has executed so sublime and rational a plan!—Yes, one may see the motions of all the muscles under the most excruciating torture—Away!—The agitation and working of the muscles were not the principal aim of the divine master. Artists seldom examine more than the mechanical execution; they almost always admire the work of hands—the effects of genius generally escape them. The mechanical execution must be praised and esteemed, I allow, but in its place; that is, after the rest. Of what consequence, after all, would it be to the general impression, if the artist had neglected to swell the veins, for the purpose of expressing pain, or ill-depicted some portions of flesh? How unfinished his work would be, were it to permit the eye of a sensible *amateur* so soon to quit the whole of the composition, and to wander over the details! How unfinished, I say, would it be, were the

foul to recollect so soon that the figures are of marble, and that the chissel has made them? Woe to the artist, who shews his talent before his work! to reach perfection, his work must be such, that the sentiment may feel immediately all its effect, and reflection afterwards discover all the merit of it. I must own, that what seizes me at the first sight of Læocöon, is the bleeding heart of a father; the manly courage of a steady soul; the deplorable fate of an old man; and, in short (for that is the last thing that develops itself), the terrible sufferings of a mortal. All this is represented at once, in this inimitable figure.

O wonderful assemblage! which attracts and fixes all my looks on a scene that, differently represented, could never have drawn, in a proper manner, a single one! Then, if my reflection seeks to find out the artist's real merit, what intelligence, what reasoning, what knowledge, what genius, in short, does not strike me in every part of the excellent performance! Agassias's view was to shew pain, tenderness, and courage, struggling together on the body of Læocöon. For this purpose he chose an attitude that opens,
displays,

displays, and actually abandons the whole of his body, to those three mighty powers acting in the conflict; and how well did the skilful artist perform this extraordinary attitude!—First of all, he makes the serpent seize Læocöon on one of his sides, so that the trunk of his body is forced to project, in order to shrink from the fatal tooth thus cruelly bent against him; he then disposes one of the monster's wreaths above the hero's shoulders, so that, in order to untwist the dreadful folding, he is forced to display both his arms, and to bend his head forward. The convulsions, however, occasioned by exquisite pain, must certainly derange this attitude.—The artist conceives the mode of fixing it, by binding all the inferior parts of the body with the redoubled folds of the hideous reptile. Behold now the struggle between courage and pain! The cry of anguish is ready to pierce through those half-opened lips, but courage seals them again, and they do not suffer it to pass. All the surface of this body, a prey to sufferance, resembles the surface of a ruffled sea. Do not you remark, among the plaintive looks of excruciating pain, the still more plaintive ones of tenderness? How interesting be-

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sides,

fides, has Agafias rendered the youngest of the two children's death! He was running for shelter into his father's bosom, when the serpent darts against him: and seizes him with the single fold, with which the reptile entangles his legs; he raises and upholds him in the air, while, with another, he benumbs one of his feeble arms. The serpent, at last, with the weight only of one of his circles, gliding on the child's bosom, presses, twists, and stifles him; the infant expires, looking at his father. Affecting look!—To die so young!—To die thus!—So delicate, and so tender a body stifled by a serpent!—But, at least, the sweet child has not been long suffering.—The tragedy is not over—the fate of the eldest is not yet accomplished. How then! Will no man, no god, disentangle from around that infant's legs those abominable hideous reptiles! In vain does the innocent victim look at his father! In vain his little hands endeavour to break those indissoluble knots! His hands, alas! are too feeble!—but, perhaps, the serpents will be glutted after having devoured Læocöon, and sucked his young brother's *blood*.—Alas! unhappy child! On *that* to build one's hopes! O what a sublime artist is Agafias! He makes all
this

this occur to my distressed imagination. With what a masterly address, once more I must say it, has Agafias contrived so moving a scene from so horrid an event! He has so much interested the heart by the image of affecting incidents; the mind by the view of so many objects that engage the mind; and the eye by the sight of so many beauties, either delicate or sublime, that I have scarcely perceived the monsters.

In proportion as my enthusiasm was thus ex-
haling, my words seemed to make an impres-
sion upon the young artist: I saw him ani-
mating himself.—That is well, exclaimed I.
Take up your pencil, begin to draw, for you
begin to feel. A cold pencil, added I, has never
imitated but what has been done by a cold pen-
cil; that is to say, cold productions. Ye ar-
tists, who confine all your skill to your eyes,
copy still nature and dead objects; it belongs
but to a vivid fancy and a sensible imagination
to copy life, motion, and passions. But I do
not conceive, said the young painter to me,
how it should be necessary, for copying well to
possess genius, sentiment, or enthusiasm: it
seems to me that good eyes are sufficient; and

I should even think, that any emotion in the mind might prevent you from seeing objects in their just light. It is sufficient, young man, to have corporal eyes for seeing and copying, what the corporal organs of vision have seen; but it is only with the mind's eye, with the eye of genius, that you can perceive and copy what the eye of genius has discovered. It is only in the emotion of the same sentiment, that has inspired particular traits, that you will be able to distinguish those traits. The characteristical traits of the soul are visible to the soul alone. How can you expect that an artist, who has never entered into the design of Agassias, and never perceived that his project, for instance, in the play of that muscle, was to express, at once, the violence of the pain, which irritates and swells it, and the effort of courage which opposes and checks it—how can you expect that such an artist could conceive this compound motion? And if he does not conceive it, how will he be able to express it? He will precisely omit the decisive trait, and think, that he approaches the nearer to anatomical exactness by omitting it. He will be on the point of drawing a defect, where the artist
has

- has designed a beauty.—Copy a good deal, young artist, but imitate more. Do not you feel, that while your hand alone is at work, your genius lies dormant?—that you are losing the valuable moment of contracting the lucky habit of enthusiasm? Exert a becoming confidence—be bold! You copy master-pieces you say—No—you copy in those master-pieces precisely what does not exist in them—and would you be a copyist for ever! But if it must be so, do you know what you should copy?—The elements of the beautiful. When once master of it, you will be able to form afterwards, at your pleasure, combinations that will be original, and properly your own. Copy naked nature under all its forms, under all its aspects; copy the tranquil nature of marble, and of the antique canvas; so far is right. Then, when you desire to animate your figures, instead of borrowing the analogous affections from other productions, compose them yourself; appropriate them to the place, the time, and the action; a visage, with borrowed passions, can never be more than a mask. This is the reason that in almost all historical paintings, the figures are so

cold and preposterous—they are but indifferent comedians. The exercise of copying is seducing, it is true : it flatters the young pupil that he shall attain the likeness of the model, and in return, requires of him nothing but time, patience, crayons, and colours ; it demands no study. You have guessed right, replied the young man ; this is generally the intention of us all when we set about copying. But how shall I then learn to become a great painter?—By becoming, first of all, a poet, an historian, and a philosopher ; for in regard to the mechanism of art, which is the last part of it, it must likewise be the last object of your occupation. Without the others it is quite useless. When one does not know either how to think, to reason, or to feel, to what purpose will it be to speak ?

It is true, that three-fourths of the artists wish but to speak ; they, unthinking men ! work but for the organs : but if you wish to work for the mind, pursue another way. Begin by cultivating both your heart and your mind—learn to feel. The advice I gave the young man is well justified by those excellent artists,
Greuze,

Greuze, Vernet, Houdon, David, Le Brun, &c. who will be an immortal honour to France. The cause of the declension of the arts is their having been treated as trades, which young men embrace like mechanical professions. Artists are astonished, and complain of the little taste shewn for the productions of the fine arts by *amateurs*, and sensible men. Why do you then, ye modern artists, imitate only those objects of nature that are too frequent or constant? Offer them some newer ones, and chiefly some of the choicest you can find in nature. Shew them the three Horatii, as our celebrated painter David did, swearing with a noble emulation the destruction of Alba, and the safety of Rome, before their aged sire. Shew them Socrates (the composition of the same master) chained in his prison, the fatal cup in his hand, and conversing with his disciples, as if sitting at a banquet with a wreath of flowers on his forehead—or, like successful rivals of Coreggio, exhibit again the beauteous image of love, that will for ever please—particularly, if you represent him under the traits of young Lubomirski, as in the picture of Mad. Le Brun, armed, not with his flambeau

or his bow, but with his naked charms, and offering a laurel or a myrtle crown to the artist, no doubt, whose ingenious pencil has given him birth, and made him approach those of Titian in point of truth, and in point of grace to those of Coreggio. But every artist now aims to gain the suffrages of the multitude; and the multitude it is not difficult to please. The taste of the vulgar ends where that of the connoisseurs begins. The vulgar quit the productions of art the moment the tints disappear, and the moral subject begins its effect—they are a kind of idolators; the image is their god.

The moment I had ceased speaking the young man thanked me, and said, with an ingenuoufness that charmed me—"Sir, I am too far gone in my profession, and too much urged by necessity, ever to think of changing the route I have embraced, and entering the career you mark out for me; it is too late to think of it." He sighed, and begged to know my name—I shall not tell it to you; it little imports you to know it; but what is of the greatest importance for you to know, is Homer and Virgil; and, above all, the love of glory—

glory—yes, I repeat it, without that love, nothing truly great can ever appear, for no efforts are ever tried. If Alexander, the conqueror of the world, overthrew empires in Asia, it was with a view that the report of their fall might rebound on the public place of Athens.

LETTER

LETTER LXXIII.

ROME.

I HAVE seen the Coliseum. In my way to it I stopped a moment under the arch of Titus. I was pleased in reflecting on the pomp of that triumph, the spoils of the Jews, the slaves who draw the car, and the benign majesty of the conqueror; the crowd of Romans, all happy in their sovereign, and gazing at him with visible marks of joy, and the thousand marks of the Greek chissel, each more beautiful than the other, still existing on that marble. I was pleased, above all, in contemplating a monument erected to Titus by Trajan. In quitting this arch you discover that of Constantine, on the right; the Coliseum on the left; and the celebrated *Meta sudans*, in the middle.

That arch, erected as a testimony of the first victory of Constantine over Maxentius, attests no more at present than the decline of
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the arts under the reign of that emperor. To ornament it, they were reduced to the necessity of stripping an arch of Trajan of its *bas reliefs*. What a sacrilege ! I soon turned from this arch, and as I went alone cast my eyes on the ruins of the *Meta sudans*, which no longer invites the passenger to rest by the coolness and murmuring of its charming waves, once overflowing all around. I proceeded and, at last came in sight of the Coliseum, which is, no doubt, one of the most wonderful monuments of the Roman power under the Cæsars. By its amazing circumference, by the multitude of stones that compose it, by this prodigious union of columns of all orders, circularly rising one above another to support three rows of porticos ; by all the dimensions, in short, of this stupendous edifice, you immediately discover it to be the work of a nation, which was the sovereign of the universe, and the slave of an emperor. I remained for a long time on the outside of it, wandering round it, without daring, as it were, to enter it : the eye embraced the whole with admiration and respect. There is, at most, but half of this vast edifice standing ; the imagination, however, can easily supply

supply the rest, and see this august monument intire. I entered at last the mighty enclosure. What a *coup d'oeil*! What striking scenes! What contrasts! What a display of ruins, visible in all the remaining portions of the monument! They are under all forms, of all ages, nay, almost of all years; for some of them bear the marks of the destroying hand of time; others, those of the merciless barbarians—these, seem to have commenced sinking yesterday; those, a few days before—behold a vast number of them ready to fall! yonder are some that are every instant falling!—there you see a tottering lofty portico, here an entablature, and a little farther a threshold!—and yet, amidst these crouded wrecks, many small plants and shrubs, together with the ivy, the moss and the briar, are creeping, penetrating, and taking deep root in the cement, whence they insensibly detach, separate, and moulder those enormous masses that had been formed in the course of so many ages, and constructed by the will of an emperor, with the arms of a hundred thousand slaves. It was here then that, on days of rejoicing, and other festivals, gladiators, martyrs, and slaves, were struggling,
and

and fighting for the purpose of causing a quicker circulation of blood in the veins of one hundred thousand idle Romans. I thought I was still hearing the roarings of the lions, the sighs of the dying, the voice of the executioners, and, which still more abashed and terrified my ears, the plaudits of the Romans. I actually thought I heard those plaudits that were incessantly pressing, encouraging, and requiring new sights of carnage; those of the men always demanding of the combatants a greater effusion of blood, and those of the women, more graceful attitudes of the dying victims. One of those women, young and handsome, presented herself to my imagination—I thought I saw her, at the time when a gladiator was falling, boldly rising on the point of her foot, and, with an eye that had been just flattering a lover, receiving or rejecting, disapproving, or applauding, the last breathing sigh of the vanquished, as if she had purchased it. Heavens! how fullen and savage must the Roman *ennui* have been! Nothing but effusion of blood could dissipate or amuse it. The idea of being the conquerors of the world, had so much excited the sensibility of the Romans, that it

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surpassed the bounds of nature, and of humanity; so that at last it could not find emotions strong enough but in conquests, in combats of gladiators and lions, in colossal or golden statues, and in the reigns of a Nero and a Caligula.

But what a change in this amphitheatre at present! In the middle of the pit uprises a cross, round which, at equal distances, have been raised fourteen altars, dedicated to different saints, in those very niches, where once wild beasts had been enclosed. There monks preach, and hold their sacred meetings, almost every day. The Coliseum was visibly declining; its stones were daily carried away; the different buildings degraded and defiled: Benedict XIV. thought of saving the Coliseum by consecrating it: he fortified it with altars, and covered it with indulgences. These walls, these columns, and these porticos, rest now but upon the names of those very martyrs, whose blood has often besprinkled them. I visited every part of the Coliseum; mounted every row, and sat in the emperors' box. Long will the soul retain the awful silence,

silence, and the striking solitude I met with in the passages, on the steps, and under the porticos of this grand amphitheatre. Now and then would I stop and hearken to the noise occasioned by the motion of my feet. I listened likewise with pleasure to a kind of dumb rustling, more perceivable to the soul than to the ear, caused by the hand of time, which is mining every side of the Coliseum. How solemn the impression I likewise felt, on viewing the day retiring by degrees from that vast extent of ground, and perceiving the night gliding along the arcades, and spreading its sable mantle over the whole !

Through the last glimpses of the day, and the first shades of the evening, intermixed, my eyes were suddenly struck with the sight of a young woman, going across the Coliseum. How beautiful her countenance, and how graceful her dress ! Her hair and her garments were lightly flowing before the evening breeze. She held, with one hand, a young child to her bosom, with the other, a bundle of roses ; on her head she carried a basket of strawberries.—The Coliseum disappeared.—
Recovered

Recovered from this gentle emotion I got down into the pit. My looks were still disputing for a long time, with the shades of night, the remains of the noble edifice, that appeared so picturesque to my eyes. They fixed upon that stone, and separate from the rest, which receives most of the air, and on which was feebly shining the last ray of the sun.—I was forced, at length, to retire, but with an imagination richly fraught with a thousand of those ideas, and a thousand of those sensations, which one can never assemble, but by the means of those ruins; and which the ruins themselves are apt in some measure to produce.

LETTER

LETTER LXXIV.

ROME.

IN this letter you will find some of my remarks on the ecclesiastical state, and the inhabitants of Rome. There are at Rome, properly speaking, but three classes: the pope, the clergy, and the people. All the clergy are drawn, as if by an universal attraction, towards the supreme dignities, nay to the triple crown—to the pontifical see itself. All those who are not of the clergy remain behind; princes, marquises, lawyers, financiers, artists, tradesmen, servants, and beggars—all these may be called, justly enough, the people. The nobility have hardly any thing else to boast of at Rome, but the consequence and splendour inherent to the antiquity of origin: they have no influence, as elsewhere, on the people, by the necessary and enormous weight of the preferences in all charges, and of that inconceivable multitude of possibilities to oppress. The clergy unite all honors, and all power;

power; and it is from more or less intimate connections with more or less considerable members of this body, that secondary importance, and subaltern consideration, arise. The greatest mass of riches belongs to them—the price of heaven, which they used to sell once pretty dearly. Of six and thirty thousand houses, said to be the number in Rome, the *mortmain* possesses twenty thousand: and, in fact, the *mortmain* has been incessantly inheriting for these many centuries, and it has never any heirs. It must in progress of time possess every thing, that is, encroach upon the whole.

The territorial revenue of the ecclesiastical state is but trifling. It certainly would not be sufficient to maintain its inhabitants. But Rome has her bulls, her ceremonies, her ruins, and her name, which is the richest of all her ruins. It is out of her power to send to the general market of Europe any of her products or manufactures; they are for inward consumption: she can never pay Europe, therefore, but with money, bulls and indulgences being no longer of any value. Were her agriculture,

ture, and her industry, more flourishing, she might, perhaps, have her share in the general trade of the world, but they are both extremely neglected, and in a terrible condition.

This is a short specimen of the manner of cultivating, in the neighbourhood of Rome, the few fields destined to that purpose. In the seasons of tillage and harvest, some herdsmen drive their cattle to the public market near Rome, to the number of two or three hundred pair of oxen: the land proprietors, or the farmers, repair thither, and, hiring a certain number of them, drive them to their farms, which lie sometimes eight or ten miles from the capital. Then in the space of a single day, the operation of the season is performed: in one day they plough, in one day they sow, and in one day they reap, and carry their harvest home: these toils of husbandry resemble not a little a juggler's tricks, that are going to be performed in the country. The soil, however, seems to be formed by nature to produce, and to demand better cultivation. A little art and some labour might obtain from the salts of this earth, and from the rays of this sun, which

engenders at present nothing but diseases, all the productions one could wish,

They reckon the population of Rome at 170,000 souls. About 10,000 of them are beggars or poor. The servants are more numerous. The clergy may be about 30,000. Celibacy is so much professed in this capital, that there are more than five women to a man: this accounts in a great measure for the extreme libertinism of Rome. The culture of the mind, here, is like that of the earth, much neglected. The mind, for this reason, produces hardly any thing else than jurisprudence, physic, divinity, and sonnets. The best ladies' education is that of receiving none at all. There is in the multitude at Rome, very little reasoning, some wit, and a good deal of fancy.— Years will confirm certain habits, and afford no experience. I am only speaking of what seems predominant in this capital.

LETTER

LETTER LXXV.

ROME.

ELECTION places the triple crown on the pontiff's head. There is no foreigner in Europe, whose authority is less limited by the laws; he speaks, and the thing is done. His will comprehends altogether the code of civil laws, and that of religious precepts; being the chief of the church and state, his will is sanctioned by the terrors of the executioner, and of the devil. His authority, however, is far from enjoying all the privileges to which it has a claim; it has been deprived of half of them.

The establishment for the temporal power is very moderate indeed; it consists of a handful of militia, which is but a ridiculous representation of a military state; in a troop of *Spirri* (sheriffs officers, thief-takers, or any thing worse) who, being branded with infamy, by the public opinion, must of consequence be

looked upon as infamous; of a pretended system of police, exercised by the rectors of the parishes; and of a vast number of tribunals, which must of course become ineffectual. These resources, which compose the temporal power, so feeble already in themselves, are rendered still weaker by the invalidities and abuses of the laws, in regard to the administration of the finances; not the least intelligence in the application, no œconomy in the appropriation, and hardly any accounts ever given of them. The administration of the finances at Rome may be called a pillage. In regard to the military power, the shadow of an army obeys—the shadow of a chief.—No military discipline, no warlike spirit. The *Sbirri* are privileged highway robbers, who are at war with the non-privileged highway-men. Their chief is obliged to furnish a chariot and a pair of horses to the *cardinal vicar*. This word alone includes a volume—The tribunals are filled by prelates, generally ignorant of the laws, and occupied in objects of a quite different nature—but they have their secretaries. *La Rota*, however, a tribunal for appeals, is a very reputable one. There the judges are obliged to declare the motives

tives for passing the sentences, and to publish them immediately; their decisions, however, have no limited time: one can always demand a new trial; a word from his holiness is quite sufficient, and such an order can be easily obtained or purchased. In regard to the penal power, the multitude of asylums (privileged places, of which there are no less than seven hundred at Rome), the insufficiency, or the connivance of the *Sbirri*, the credit of many private persons, the nature of the galleys, not severe in the least, and badly looked after—all these make a mere scarecrow of the penal laws existing in the pope's dominions—I forgot to mention, that all those houses, upon which cardinals have affixed their arms, can shelter the creditors from the pursuits of justice. Such asylums are very numerous, as some cardinals derive considerable profit from them. Impunity becomes a revenue at Rome. The power of religion has preserved a little more spirit and authority; but it has lost a good deal of its pristine power, for these three equally substantial reasons—the multitude of indulgences, the facility of absolutions, and the prevailing habitude. From the remarks I have

taken the liberty to make on this government, it should seem that Rome, as a political state, must be approaching to its ruin; as a social one, torn by a thousand intestine disorders; and as a civil one, a prey to all the miseries a nation can be afflicted with.—It will be incredible to you, and yet nothing is certainly more true, that Rome is perhaps the safest, the calmest, and the least unhappy of all the political, the social, and the civil states of Europe. But how can one explain this phenomenon?—By the preponderance of the action of moral or secret causes, which tend to safety, to peace, and to happiness, over the action of physical or apparent causes, which tend to a dissolution, to disorder, and to unhappiness. I shall endeavour to explain all this to you to-morrow.—For the present, adieu.

LETTER

LETTER LXXVI.

ROME.

THE ecclesiastical state, without money, without troops, without offensive or defensive means, in the midst of other states, which covet its situation and former grandeur, and almost without population, would seem always ready to fall an easy conquest to any power that had a mind to attack it. But behold with what emulation, moral causes either support or re-instate it! See the jealousy of those very neighbouring powers, which keeps them all at bay! Look at the force of religious opinions, that supplies soldiers to Rome from all parts of the world! Behold, in short, the political interest of all the Christian princes, in watching over the preservation of a despotism, on which all others depend; a despotism, which, by placing all thrones in heaven, spares them both troops and money, and which, in short, possesses, lends, or sells these mighty words, reckoned of as much value as an army.—*Autho-*

ity springs from God. Those who pretend that the pope's spiritual authority might be separated from his temporal, are certainly wrong; for it is incontestably true, that the monarch's crown supports the pontifical diadem: to separate them would be breaking them. Physical force is the necessary base of all moral powers, which, in reality, are nothing more in themselves than physical powers also; the only difference is, that they are complicated and secret. The pope's temporal authority will not cease, in all probability, until religion shall be divested of superstition.

What a duration will not this feeble threat still grant to Rome! For it will be, perhaps, impossible for religion and philosophy to purge catholicism of all superstition. The natural weakness of the human mind, the invincible ignorance of the last conditions of society, the power of habit, and the interest of several passions, will always prevent the Christian religion from becoming perfectly pure; from raising herself towards that heaven from which she descended, and returning to those simple and sublime ideas which the vulgar can never pretend to reach.—But the ecclesiastical

ecclesiastical state, you will say, is very weak at present—Never has it been so stable as since it has been so weak. Henceforward it will have nothing more to dread, for, from this period, it inspires no fear.

LETTER LXXVII.

ROME.

THE tranquillity that reigns at Rome may be easily explained in this manner. Although the pope has an absolute power in his hands, he cannot easily make a bad use of it: he is not born a prince; the crown is the gift of fortune to him, an accessory to the pontifical diadem, one of the unctions annexed to the papal dignity, and a deposit rather than a property: he is generally old, and besides, habits, usual wants, talents, and ideas, are not so easily got all at once; one generally acquires them, and, with difficulty, at a certain age. An important consideration is likewise a great check to those popes, who might be tempted to oppress: to be respected as pontiff, they must render themselves amiable as monarchs. The despotism of popes consists more in not making use of their power, than making a bad one of their authority. Weakness is almost the only tyranny of popes; and that cannot cause many troubles;

troubles: it gives time to the nation to obtain the accession of a new pontiff. The dignified clergy likewise can have no interest in disturbing the established order. The pope's authority, gentle and light in itself, hardly rests upon him. Besides these three prevailing opinions, that it is sacred, that it is necessary, and that it is momentary, are the greatest supporters of it. Ambition, in short, and the hope of exercising part of that authority for the present, and of exercising it in full some day or other, contribute very much to taking all its burden from it, and leaving to it all its weight at the same time. Can one then imagine, that the cardinals will ever attempt to check the power of the papal crown? As they are, they are actually nothing in the eyes of the state, of the people, of the clergy, of the sovereign, nay, of all Europe; but only on account of what they may one day happen to be—they will not, therefore, ever diminish a power they stand a chance of attaining—they will not certainly diminish the pope's authority. In regard to the people, a crowd of moral causes fits their minds, as well as their faith, to an implicit obedience, under the pontifical yoke. They

have an absolute master, it is true, but they have only one, and often change him; they think his mighty and infallible power derived from God; and the diadem is at too great a distance from them. If the people are quiet at Rome, although not kept within bounds by the police, nor awed by justice, the reason is, that the non-existence of the causes of disorder, supplies the place and the means of good order. Nothing is more rare at Rome than professed robberies, burglaries, or popular commotions. The fatal knife, it is true, prevails in a great degree, and frequent assassinations seldom excite any emotion or horror. The stabs are seen, given, and heard of with indifference. The murderer is neither reckoned wicked, nor dangerous, nor infamous. He must have been provoked to it, say they. The use of knives is the manner of duelling among the populace. It is looked upon as a part of justice left to the people, and rarely goes beyond the passion of revenge, which is moderate on account of the very terror of revenge. It is revenge that constitutes the police of Rome. They could certainly, if they would, take the knife from the people, and reunite to the sovereign justice
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that branch of the criminal one, which has been mislaid; it would be sufficient to suppress privileged grounds, have a proper government over the galleys, and no longer force, from the mouths of the dying, those doubtful words which are supposed to seal the murderer's pardon; for here the deadly wound of a knife is so much looked upon as a private crime, that the deceased's pardon absolutely absolves the sovereign justice. But were all these innovations to take place at Rome, would the people gain by them? The knife is the cause of some victims, it is true, but it prevents oppression, which causes many more. It certainly brings some to an untimely end, but it diminishes the weight of misfortunes. The superior, who can oppress, and the inferior, who can avenge himself, are pretty much on a par, and have but fair play. I am far, however, from approving the use of knives; I only represent what seems to be the least evil in a bad system of policy. Let us return to the infrequency of robberies.

The number of natural wants, which prompt to theft, is far less at Rome, than any where else.

else. The earth, and industry, little enrich the Romans, but amply sated, and sufficiently clad by the fertility and heat of the climate, they stand little in want of industry and the earth. Beggary, that degenerate state of poverty, the precarious condition of which is every where else the ordinary source of theft, has not this inconveniency here, for it is an encouraged profession. There is not a beggar, whose beggary will not support, and supply, not only for the present, but also warrant him a sustenance for the time to come. A man, a woman, a child, have nothing to do but to offer their rags to view, or expose their wounds in the streets of Rome, and they are sure of finding something to eat immediately. The pity of the Romans never reasons—what does a beggar want more? Degraded by misery, by infirmities, or by idleness, animal life is what he wants; that is quite sufficient for him, and the moment he has it he is as happy as—his dog. There are more beggars at Rome than any where else—they abound from every quarter; pilgrimage carries and leaves there a vast number of them. Every avenue is open to them; they are allowed to beg, to implore charity,

charity, and to pursue it, wherever they can: they go in and out of shops and coffee-houses, like domestic animals—delicacy suffers and murmurs, but humanity whispers to delicacy—*they are men.*

Another reason, that still more prevents the frequency of private larcenies, or public robberies, is the privation of luxury, and chiefly of that of the most contagious kind—the impertinent parade of gaudy finery. They are in want of few superfluities at Rome. Riches can be but of little service to all degrees of ambition, for they must pass through the ecclesiastical ranks, where they are forced to remain. Besides, as every body is known, the less hopes are there consequently of imposing by vanity; the less occasion, therefore, for displaying a vain pomp, and of course for committing great crimes. Superfluities have been the cause of greater crimes, than the necessities of life. Misery, idleness, ambition, and propensity to women, are no inducements to steal at Rome. I mentioned the propensity to the sex, because, here, both the climate and manners furnish abundance of women, even to chuse.

chuse. Private debauchery is so great, that public is actually unknown—it is not necessary: thus in certain countries poverty is so general, that there is no beggary. Some thefts however happen sometimes at Rome, but they are rather temptations, and favourable opportunities, than the combined work of a determined hand. The propensities for stealing being so few, and but little active, and the punishments not very severe, account for murders not being so frequent. What is the reason now that a bad distribution of justice, and bad political oeconomy, never tire the people's patience? We must distinguish the judiciary contests of the people, the populace, and the lower class of citizens, from those of more important stations—the former generally turn upon trifles, and as justice shews itself plainly at once, they commonly obtain pretty equitable sentences, or at least the injustice is so subtle and hidden, that it must escape the eyes of the vulgar. In regard to the latter, their decision interests but few individuals; besides, the equity and iniquity of decisions may easily remain concealed, in the complication of forms and interests, or in the obscurity of the laws.

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Of all political administrations, the only part that truly affects the people is, what touches them immediately—that is to say, the price of provisions. When the price increases, the people murmur. What do the heads of the government do then? They listen very attentively, and if the murmurs do not become a general cry, they go on their own way, taking proper care however not to let in that *last drop*, which alone makes the vessels of iniquity run over, as well as all others. When the people are really exclaiming, government lowers the price, but diminish the weight or the measure—the Roman people are then happy. Such are the Roman people; such are the people of other countries; such, in a word, are the people in general. At Rome they are more patient, because the others build their hopes only on time, and they, on the day after to-morrow perhaps. A pope is always for them a dying king: the greatest crime, therefore, the popes can be guilty of, towards the Romans, is to live too long, and thereby retard the drawing of a lottery, that has prizes for every body, and where every body has some tickets. The cardinals have tickets for the great prize—the pon-

pontifical seat; the prelates have cardinals' tickets; and the abbés, prelates' tickets; the nobility, tickets of credit; some, tickets for places; the tradesmen, tickets for sale; the artificers, tickets for employment; the beggars, tickets for alms—all, in short, have tickets for a change of government, for spectacles, for festivals. Why such shouts, such exclamations of joy, and such extravagant madness from one end of Rome to the other?—Has Rome obtained a victory?—Yes, a pope is dead.

LETTER

LETTER LXXVIII.

ROME.

LET us examine how these people can be happy under the yoke of absolute authority; under the influence of so many secondary powers; under the continual action of poverty, and being a prey to so many defects and vices of a detestable administration. How can such people be happy? That they should obey, I grant you: patience, hope, habit, and religion, have placed at Rome very considerable barriers between oppression and revolt—But that they should obey cheerfully!—You have already seen that the pope's absolute authority cannot lie too heavy on the people, and that the influence of the great over their destiny is still less oppressive. In all the connections of the great with the great, and of the high with the low, there reign an incredible complacency, a facility of manners, a visible good nature, and an insinuating universal flattery: this is owing intirely to fortune, who

who exercises at Rome all her caprices, generally in secret, and in silence, through the means of valets, monks, secretaries, or women. One cannot, therefore, exactly know, whom you deal with, the consequence of the person you are speaking to, nor the influence of the man you are making a bow to, as he passes. That poor priest may perhaps be a prelate to-morrow; that poor prelate, a cardinal; that poor devil, a secretary or a valet to a man in place. In such uncertainty all persons are polite to one another, and the soft endearing expressions of kindness and benevolence, the smiles of protection, and the eager shaking of hands, in token of friendship, are lavished on every body. The aspect courts the aspect, and the eye meets the eye with a smile.

The Romans have a wonderful facility in changing countenance, or rather stand in no need of changing it; for the best masks in the world are certainly Italian faces. Their pantomime, however, spoils all; their gestures, their words, their looks, &c. in order to make it too expressive, render it too insignificant. For this reason, the Italians never trust
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to expressions of the countenance, to words, or even to accent itself—events alone can enforce belief. Do you wish to know the behaviour of a cardinal, when he visits another, chiefly when the latter enjoys a place? On entering the first ante-chamber, where the servants are, he bows to them; in the second, where the *valets de chambre* are ranged, he smiles; in the third, the place for the gentlemen in waiting, he takes hold of their hands; and in the fourth, where he finds the master of the ceremonies, the introducer, he smiles, repeats his inclinations, shakes hands, and chats; he enters at last into the presence of his colleague.—You would take them, in appearance, to be two intimate friends, cordially embracing each other, but in their hearts they are actually two real enemies or rivals, ready to stifle one another with their embraces. This political necessity of appearing polite to every body, is the sure means, therefore, at Rome, to prevent the inferior class of the people from suffering those oppressions, which the laws themselves, are elsewhere insufficient to shelter them from. The mediocrity of fortunes, in short, levels here in a certain manner all stations

tions and individuals; all heads are almost close to one another; despotism then must be very ingenious indeed, to strike precisely but at one.

LETTER

LETTER LXXIX.

ROME.

THIS letter shall end my remarks on the happiness of the Romans, founded, as I have proved in those that preceded, on an apparent political bondage, and on an actually true liberty. None of their natural wants have superfluities; but all enjoy the necessities of life, and those necessities are but few. Hunger is without energy; a meal a-day is quite sufficient; very little meat, some small fish, greens, and fruit, compose their frugal and only repast. Thirst demands and consumes very little wine, but plenty of lemons and ice. In regard to their dress, climate and custom reduce it to a simple garment; whoever is not naked may pass as sufficiently dressed. Both sexes find their account in *cicisbeism*, facility in manners, and indulgence in religion. There is a particular want, not comprehended in the list of human necessities, but perhaps the most commanding of all, which plays the most considerable

fiderable part on the stage of life, and which however has but little engaged the attention of legislation, or even of philosophy—it is the want, which man feels in exhausting his activity, that is, in spending the rest of his life, after having satisfied his first wants. It is evident that the *too much* of our existence, if I may be allowed the expression, cooped up within us by constraint, or for want of exercise, is the infallible cause of that *mal-aise*, (trouble) which we call *ennui*, (irksomeness) and which actually becomes a dreadful torment. It is with a view to prevent or conquer this doleful modification of the mind, and to avoid, in short, *l'ennui*, that civilized man uses, more or less, all the efforts he can—invents and cultivates innumerable arts—improves himself or degenerates—sets the whole world in action, and fills the historic page with his name. This want is, more or less, predominant in the different degrees of civilization, and under different temperatures. At Rome, for instance, the climate mitigates it very much, as it does all other wants. Besides, political circumstances, far from developing, cherishing, and increasing it, as they do in other nations,

tions, concur, on the contrary, to restrain it still more. You see that European policy actually retires every day, more and more, from the ecclesiastical state, as the sea from its shores. This state, it is true, lies in the territory of Europe, but it can hardly be said to be in the society of Europe; it has no longer a place on the globe. It has no longer then any share in the general motion, nor in the habitual commerce, nor in those frequent electrical shocks of public storms, which support, irritate, and develope the sensibility of nations. The want of consuming one's activity, therefore, reduced by these two causes, does not require among the Romans all that space, it stands in need of elsewhere, to exercise itself, and be satisfied: the various fields of philosophy, literature, and politics, are not necessary to it. The little superfluity that remains of their existence, after satisfying their immediate wants, they pass in sleeping, in loving, in vanities, in theological disputes, and in processions.

After dinner they go to bed, where they sleep till six o'clock in the evening; afterwards nothing is done, or meer *nothings* are under-

taken. Night comes on ; all work is interrupted, and all shops shut up : then husbands, wives, sons, and daughters, take their flight till three o'clock in the morning ; some walk up and down *il corso*, the longest street in Rome, others go to the *conversazione*, in private *cotteries* ; others to a cold collation at a tavern ; even minds of the most serious turn take their recreation till the next day. Every night, in short, in summer time, is a public festival, at which love presides, not very refined, it is true ; for the senses speak to the senses, and are soon understood, or vanity to vanity ; rarely the heart and the imagination speak to the imagination and the heart. So many good fortunes may be met with at Rome, that there are properly speaking no good fortunes there. In the manners of private or public men, one rarely finds that moral character, and good breeding, so frequent in French manners.—The beautiful moral is absolutely unknown at Rome : what good there is, is owing to instinct, good sense, or custom. Now for the purpose of attaining that beautiful moral of every kind, sensibility is mostly tormented—a prey to the struggles of the mind, to the emulations
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of the soul, and to the scruples of conscience, it adorns with infinite trouble and refinement, the discourses, the writings, the passions, all the transactions, in short, of public or private life. Nothing of this is ever attempted at Rome. The life of the greatest part of the individuals here has but two epochs—infancy, and old age—the other seasons are wanting.

Two other things contribute, in a singular manner, to the happiness of the Romans: religion, by her absolutions, buries always the past, and by her promises, gives always a fair colouring to the future. The Romans are the people who fear least, and hope most.—They have the most implicit, and at the same time the most convenient, religion. Let them but attend to some religious ceremonies, which are like concerts and operas, let them habitually recite certain words, and heaven is theirs. They have no occasion to be in a constant agitation with their sentiments, and their ideas, nor to struggle, all their life-time, with their passions. The temperature of their religion is as mild as that of their climate. The sensibility of a Roman being but moderate,

and always unconfined, he is very seldom unhappy, and never to a high degree. Do not imagine, however, that his sensibility could not be excited to extremes, like that of women; his weakness itself renders him very susceptible of it; but it would be necessary that the springs, that had set it in motion, should remain constantly bent. You know what happened at Rome two thousand years ago, when the ambition of conquering the world began to slacken—all relaxed at once; in a short time the empire of the universe was dissolved. The last emperors and the popes made their appearance.—Ancient Rome was but an artificial one; the Rome of nature is this; such as her climate and soil would have her to be, and such as they have made her, whenever they have been at liberty to act.—Never will the present Romans have that degree of genius and imagination, which the tension of fibres communicates, and which in morals or in arts finds the energetic and penetrating style, which reaches at last the sublime.

They will reach only what lies on this side of sublimity, and which embraces but the eloquent,

quent, the copious, and the easy. They will not, in short, possess any true genius, which is generally produced by imitation, if I may be permitted to express my idea in this manner; and if they have any, they will acquire it by chance. But mistake me not; for what embellishes a nation in the eyes of another, is by no means what makes it happy. It is with nations, as it is with individuals; they are almost always unhappy with those very qualities which bestow a greater lustre on them, and render them the objects of envy.

To conclude my analysis—The Romans resemble very much those peaceable, obscure, and moderate men, whose destiny is envied by none; who are neither amiable, nor useful; whom none would wish to resemble, and with whom nobody would chuse to live—but who, however, are in themselves happy.

LETTER LXXX.

ROME.

LET the woman of too exquisite sensibility, who is apprehensive of whatever can reveal the sweet remembrance of love, never enter the church of La Vittoria at Rome, for there she would see the statue of St. Theresa, Bernini's inimitable master-piece. Theresa is half lying down on a couch; all her body is inclining—her look, her *traits*, and above all, her hands and feet are languishing.—The busy thought begins to blush—let me seek another object.—And is this church called the church of Victory! If, however, any passion has troubled the peace of your soul, go to the fountain of Moses, and stop before those couching lions, from whose half-opened mouths two floods are streaming upon marble. The repose of these lions will calm you. It is the repose of a powerful being! All this animal's existence is at rest and peace. How that noble paw, turned in before his majestic countenance, has forgotten

gotten its claws ! It seems entirely disarmed. But what genius, what art, what a chissel, has animated these two blocks of black marble into lions ? Art, it is true, can imitate repose, but it is generally the repose of death ; *this* is the repose of life.

LETTER LXXXI.

ROME.

IN one of my preceding letters, I mentioned the rectors of parishes at Rome, and remarked that they were one of the instruments of the political government. There are ninety of them, and their function puts them in the rank of justices of peace. At the request of one of these rectors, a man is arrested and imprisoned: I speak of the common people, for persons, a little distinguished in life, know how to defend themselves: it is here, as every where else. The common people have the knife for themselves, it is true, with which they may keep in awe the rectors, who are too despotic, and of which they are actually afraid. I have known one of them, who, for fear of that dangerous weapon, did not dare to stir out of his house.

I will give you an example of the civil and religious despotism which these rectors can exercise.

cise. All the catholics are obliged to receive the sacrament at Easter. Under what penalty do you think? under that of not receiving it—the penalty of excommunication! Some time after Easter, the rectors make out a list of the refractory parishioners, and send it to government. On St. Bartholomew's-day, all the lists are published, with a decree of excommunication, which the pontiff hurls from his holy throne. A rector was inveighing bitterly one day against this scandalous custom! "For my part," said he to me, "I never send any list; but if any of my parishioners has not done his duty, after having warned him in private, and summoned him to appear at the gate of the church, I order him to be taken up and sent to prison. He must then take the sacrament by force—I kept one of them, last year, confined for six weeks, and he took it at last." This rector told me afterwards a religious anecdote worthy to be remembered. The pope ordered, a few years ago, a general mission about Rome, with plenty of indulgences. It was a thanksgiving for an extraordinary good harvest. The number of non-receivers of the sacrament amounted so high that year, that the pope very prudently forbade

forbade the publishing of the lists, and excommunicated nobody. He was afraid of the scandal such a number might occasion: he was afraid of encreasing it by making it known.—But why, said I to the rector, do you suffer all these gross superstitions, which dishonour the divine worship, and at the same time compromise them?—To have some religion go down with them, replied he—Ah! ah! *M. le Curé*, you do then as Moliere did; he gave *le medecin malgré lui*, to make the misanthropist go down, Our good rector smiled, and instantly replied—“This people, Sir, must be caught by the senses; too refined a religion would not have body enough for them: they must see it, touch it, and feel it; it must, therefore, be mixed with superstition.”—I reproached likewise the rector for his extreme indulgence to libertinism. “Ah! good Sir, we are so prone to love; it is the interest itself of religion to connive at it; were we more severe on this article, it would be forsaken. We have tried the effects of rigour more than once, and they have but badly succeeded.”—You are still a pagan; you sacrifice to the sun—it is true; to the sun, and to celibacy. Celibacy, by profession, is very considerable

considerable here, and must be properly respected: it would be dangerous and impolitic to irritate or provoke it.

I was a witness last night to a singular manner of devotion; I saw a prodigious quantity of people climbing up on their knees the steps of the *Ara cœli*: every body muttered some prayers; a young man begged fervently of heaven to soften the heart of his mistress; a young woman to be soon provided with a husband. Some were entreating Providence that they might win in the lottery, and others—Such, in fact, I am assured, are the objects and requests of their prayers. I could not help laughing at such unaccountable religious clamoring—and the rector, who saw me—Well! Sir, what would you have us do? This ceremony, I am sure, answers two very good purposes: time is not worse employed, and our religion subsists—and your revenue too, good Mr. Rector.

LETTER LXXXII.

ROME.

GUIDO has allegorically represented on the cieling of the Rospigliosi-palace the rising of Aurora. Ye beauties, who never rise early enough to see the dawn, lend your ears to my description. While night is still enveloping the vast ocean, to which, however, the foaming billows afford at intervals a conspicuous light; young, beautiful, and simple, clad with the brilliant veil of all the colours, ingenious emblem of the clouds that accompany her; holding some flowers in her hands, behold the rosy-fingered Morn suddenly appearing in the air, which blushes round her by degrees. With eyes of tender sweetness, she looks behind her at the sun, who follows, and with no less expressive tenderness, looks at her in his turn: the dawn, in fact, and the sun, never can reach one another; they can hardly cast a glance at each other on a fine morning—In the mean time four noble bounding steeds draw the

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the vermilion car, shining over the azure waves, bright with refulgent flame: the youngest daughters of Aurora, the first Hours, so much resembling their mother, and so much resembling one another, with heavenly smiles on their cheeks, holding each other by the hand, form a circle round the car, while, hovering between the goddess and the coursers, Love bears the flambeau of the Cynthian god: he shakes it round the universe, and in an instant shines the brilliant day!—What a pity that time continually effaces this beautiful piece of painting! The figure of Aurora is every day growing paler and paler. She is no longer so rosy-fingered as she was; in a short time she will be reduced to announce the winter mornings. Although, however, this picture be so charming, it must be owned, it offers some small defects to the admirer's eye. Aurora has too serious an air; the tears, that stand trembling on her eye-lid, are not enough expressive of love. She should glide through the yielding air, and she only goes along. Why those flowers tied in a nosegay! Those roses are, by far, too many in her hands—she holds them too tight, not one of them drops. It was La Fontaine

taine who had seen Aurora ; he who has painted
a young beauty, whose head rests on her arm ;
her arm upon a cloud, dropping some flowers,
not scattered on the ground.

“ La tête sur un bras, et son bras sur la nue ;

“ Laisant tomber des fleurs, et ne le semant

“ pas.”

Do not you perceive in these lines Aurora
and La Fontaine ?

LETTER

LETTER LXXXIII.

ROME.

I HAVE quitted statues, obelisks, pictures, and palaces, for to-day, and am come to the Villa-Borghese gardens, that I may rest the mind a while from admiring. I have been amusing myself in these gardens with nature for these three hours. I saw just now a herd of fine deer, wandering, as I do, in this charming enclosure: on seeing me they all stopped, and turned all together their beautiful heads towards me; then re-taking on a sudden their course, they offered to the following eye a thousand neat and delicate feet, scouring so swift over the stems of flowers and points of grass, that they seemed to be winding their flight, if I dare say so, with incredible volubility—Let us now mount that eminence—what an extensive view? I see the Campania of Rome.—How can one not be charmed at the sight of so beautiful and so vast a landscape? I descry the union of all cultures, the contrast
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of all colours; the assemblage of numberless cottages and country seats; those distant bounds that join the earth to heaven; those erring prospects, passing so rapidly, that one finds a change at every view; that bluish vapour, which veils the declivity of those hills; that bright shining snow with which their summits sparkle—and, in the midst of all these objects, poplar, pine, and cypress trees, rising among tombs and aqueducts in ruins, seeming to intersect the horizon.—But still more pleased am I with this sweet grove, wherein I am seated at present. Charming retreat! Here, quite alone, feeling myself alone, with pen, paper, ink, and paper by me; the purest sky over my head; shrubs of a light and dark green smiling on my right and left, while, in the midst of these verdant groups, the rich porphyry boldly rising in columns, bears on its brilliant top, statues of resplendent marble.—But I perceive a colonnade! let us rise and approach it.—Behold some antique statues! There is Venus, Apollo, a Faun!—And thou blind, but unerring archer, who tryest to hide thyself amid those myrtles——can one ever mistake thee, almighty Love! There are likewise funeral in-

scriptions

scriptions engraved on marble tablets, encrusted in the wall—*To a father and a mother, who tenderly loved me—to my child—to a sister, who was dear to me*—Charming retreat! How pleased is the heart thus secluded from mankind in the very bosom of nature!—But what agreeable, soft sounds glide through the silence that surrounds me! It is the enchanting concert of the evening—nightingales which exhale their plaintive notes; doves, which, by their cooing, proclaim the parting kiss; birds that hasten to fly the threatening night; zephyrs that quit the shaking cups of those flowers which their genial influence has blown this day; and, in short, all these waters that spread in rivulets, in gushes, or in falls, over the turf and marbles of these immense gardens.

Oh! could I but see all my children here, running before me at this moment, followed by their amiable mother, rich in her virtues, and her children, and filling my heart at once with hearty shouts of happiness and joy! How pleased should I gaze at them spreading across the thickets, treading on turf, stealing with nimble steps to all these evening shades,
and

and replacing, in their frolicks, on the moss and the flowers, the butterflies and zephyrs ! I would take my Charles by the hand, and lead him yonder, under those laurels, before those statues of Brutus, Cato, and Cicero.—There would I endeavour to inspire a little his young soul, by talking with these marbles to him, of the souls of those great men.—Too flattering illusion ! Alas ! they are three hundred leagues from me, and many months must yet keep us asunder !

But night comes on, and the last beam of parting day is seen on the top of that obelisk—it dies on the forehead of that Venus——Let others, charming, delightful villa ! speak of thy architecture, thy marbles, thy bronzes, thy pictures, and thy magnificence ; I will speak of thy birds, thy doves, thy turf, thy deer and thy hinds, but chiefly of the silence and peace of thy solitary gardens. Amiable peace ! as thou appearest in this retreat, appear also in my breast ; follow me through the mazes of the human passions, through the evils mankind endure, and through those they inflict on others : drive from me that secret inquietude, that inevitably torments the heart

heart of the individual, who has been obliged to pass judgment on men and things—on life and death.

LETTER

LETTER LXXXIV.

ROME.

IF I have not spoken to you as yet of St. Peter's church, the reason is, that it is impossible to find proper expressions in any language, to speak of it as it really deserves. The place that one sees before it, is certainly one of the finest in Europe. In the middle of an immense circumference, circularly crowned with a vast portico, that supports two hundred colossal statues, on four hundred majestic columns, pompously rises in the air a magnificent obelisk, between two stately basons, blackened by bronze and time, from whence gush, sparkle, and fall, murmuring night and day, perennial waters. This obelisk is of granite, cut in Ægypt, and raised by pope Sixtus. It is not astonishing that St. Peter's church should have become so prodigious and grand an edifice. It was projected by the vanity of Julius II. who pretended to have a temple for his tomb; executed by the enterprizing genius of Leo X. who

who wished to have all the master-pieces of the fine arts centered in one; and completed at last, after many centuries, by the temper of Sixtus, whose ambition it was to complete every thing.

This monument is one of the most extensive we know. It divides the Vatican hill in two, covers Nero's circus, on which it is built, and ends, by shutting, between Rome and the universe, the celebrated triumphal way. Nothing can describe the ecstatic ravishment of the soul on entering St. Peter's church for the first time, when you find yourself on that extensive pavement, surrounded by enormous pillars, before stately columns of bronze, in view of all those pictures and statues, of all those mausoleums and altars, and under such a dome—the soul, in short, is entranced at the amazingly grand and sublime of this extensive edifice; to which the pride of the greatest pontiffs, and the ambition of all the fine arts, have not ceased for many ages to add grandeur, magnificence, and solidity in granite, in gold, in marble, in bronze, and in canvas. A greater quantity of stones might be heaped up to a
greater

greater height, and on a larger surface of ground; but of so many colossal parts to compose a whole, that appears but great; of so much resplendent riches to make a monument, that appears but magnificent; and of so many parts to make a simple whole—that is certainly a master-piece of art, and chiefly the work of Michael Angelo. There are eighteen whole years of Michael Angelo's life in St. Peter's church.

But what faults, some critics say, are there not in this edifice! None to the view or the sentiment—the compasses must look for them, and reason find them. And will you take a rule to measure the proportions of such a temple!—all the time I was in it, my thoughts were fixed on God—on eternity. These are the true proportions! It is impossible to be filled with common sentiments, or common ideas in this cathedral. What a theatre for the eloquence of religion! I could wish that, one day, in the midst of the most pompous apparel, thundering on a sudden in the depth of this awful silence, rolling from tomb to tomb, and re-echoed through all these vaults, the
voice

voice of a Bossuet would rise, and emit, through an audience of monarchs, the sovereign word of the King of kings, to call to an account the consciences of those pale trembling monarchs, for all the blood that flows, and all the tears that are shed, through them, at this moment, on the surface of the earth!

LETTER

LETTER LXXXV.

ROME.

I HAVE a few words more to say about the Roman ladies ; for in the history of civilization three principal articles compose, as you know, the whole chapter of women, figure, gallantry, and dress ; and I have not yet spoken to you of their dress. The Roman, as well as the Genoese, and the Italian ladies in general, are still very ignorant in the extensive and important art of dressing ; in that art of suiting the ornaments to the dress, and of adapting both, to the shape, the figure, the complexion, the age, nay, even to the morning or evening hours ; in that art of softening by gradations, of coinciding by shades, of enhancing by contrasts ; in that art, in short, so skilful, and so expensive, of equipping a woman completely for vanity, coquetry, or fashion. But I am sensible, that such an accusation, which tends to compromise the honour of the Roman ladies all over France, and particularly
at

at Paris, stands in need of proofs. Here they are in three words—Shall I say it? Will the world believe me? All the women at Rome, without excepting the charming Rosalinda—yes, every woman wears a wig. It is a sacrifice their coquetry has paid to indolence. Accustomed to take a nap every day in the afternoon, till six o'clock in the evening, which is actually interposing a second night in the middle of the day, they have found that it would cost them too much trouble to raise twice a-day the structure of a head-dress; they all therefore submit their hair to the fatal scissars. The Roman ladies use white paint, whenever they mean to be properly dressed. But after all, if an Italian woman wishes to be a lily, a French one desires to be a rose. For shame! has not nature made them women? Gauze, flowers, and artificial heads, when nature has given them hair!—red paint, when she gives them a modest blush!—How! even white! Has she not bestowed on them candour, innocence and tenderness? This affectation of dress, this ingratitude of women towards nature, is very ancient. Propertius reprehended Cynthia for it two thousand years ago. I shall therefore

let Propertius end my censure. His agreeable
verses, which you may read, may convert per-
haps sooner than my prose.

LETTER

LETTER LXXXVI.

ROME.

I INTEND to set out to-morrow for Naples, but I shall certainly return to take my leave of Rome. I must not defer any longer saying, *first* a few words about Cardinal de Bernis, and *afterwards* respecting the present pope. It is in *this* order these two personages are named at Rome. The cardinal has been almost always happy; he knew well how to suit himself to every station, and give pleasure to all with whom he conversed: on Parnassus with the Muses; at court, with Kings; at the toilet, with the Graces; at the Vatican, with the Popes; and at his house at Albano, with himself. He always found, or adopted, the talents and virtues that were necessary for him. His house is open to all travellers, from all quarters of the world. He keeps, as he says himself, *an Hotel, at the Sign of France, in*

a Carfax of Europe. Cardinals are seldom seen any where else but at his table. They carry their avarice so far, as to forgive his magnificence. I had been told that he was not pleased, whenever his poetical productions were mentioned—that might be before he became a cardinal. For my part I am a witness, that he does no such injury now either to the Muses, or to posterity. I have heard him speak very handsomely, and even with gratitude, of the author of the Four Seasons, and of l'Abbé de Bernis. The cardinal is the most easily accessible of any man in the world, and converses with the most perfect simplicity. He talks much, but fast, and never thinks of having said the good things he repeats. They say, that his wit is somewhat impaired; that is, has lost some of its brilliancy; I do not believe it—I am apt rather to think, that he makes use sometimes of the privilege he is entitled to, by the reputation he deserves, of being a man of genius; he renounces the trouble, the vanity, or the ridicule, of displaying wit with ostentation; in the same manner, if I may be allowed the comparison, as brave men, who have given
many

many proofs of their valour, will often refuse to fight. He seems to be quite free from prejudice, and without the least pretension. His birth, his success in the world, and his dignity, are looked upon by him as the gifts of fortune. It is difficult to be more beloved, and popular, at Rome, than Cardinal de Bernis is, though particularly respected and esteemed. Whoever approaches him, returns contented—he is so just! All that surround him are happy—he is so good!

In regard to the pope, I shall only tell you, that he goes every day to kiss St. Peter's feet; that he has been to plead himself at Vienna, at the emperor's feet, the cause of the monks; that by his orders the salutary scheme of draining *le Paludi Pontine* (the Pomptine marshes) is carried on with ardour; that he enriches the celebrated museum of Clement XIV. that he is reforming the code of criminal laws; that his nephew himself has lost a law-suit of great consequence. In short, jealous of governing himself, and chiefly of appearing to do so, that his subjects may think it, he has just chosen for his prime minister a man of infinite

merit. Such is Pius VI. of a noble figure, and always seen and received with pleasure, and demonstrations of joy. A fine figure is of no small advantage to sovereigns—their countenances reign.

LETTER

LETTER LXXXVII.

ROME.

I HAVE been just visiting the church of St. Onofrio's convent—and what have you been doing at St. Onofrio's? I hear you say—I have seen glory in all her nothingness, fortune in all her caprice, and genius in all its misery—I have contemplated, in short, the ashes of that immortal poet, whom nature induced to write verses, when but seven years old; to finish his Jerusalem Delivered, at thirty, and to carry a heart full of tenderness and love to the very tomb; who, after having consumed the greatest part of his life at court, in exile, and in fetters; after having been treated, now as a man of genius, and now as a madman, all on a sudden, towards the end of his career, by a caprice of fortune, saw himself invited to have his head, which was silvered over with age, crowned in the capitol; but by another caprice of that inconstant goddess, was buried

in the convent of St. Onofrio, on the very eve of his coronation. The inscription is worthy of such a poet as Tasso: TORQUATI TASSI OSSA HIC JACENT. The following words do honour to the Monks, who raised this monument, that strangers might know where Tasso lies—*Hoc ne nescius esset hospes, fratres hujus ecclesiae posuerunt*.—They knew then the value of so great a man!

There are some who pretend, that Tasso had been really mad; but never had he any other folly, than an extreme sensibility, and a superior genius. There have existed, at all times, some of those *great* common-thinking men, who, for the sake of refusing the respect and admiration due to truly great men, have dared to call sensibility folly, and the efforts of genius madness. It can hardly be imagined, what a degree of misery Tasso was reduced to by fortune. The hand that had drawn the portraits of Armida, Herminia, Clorinda, Godfrey, and Tancred, was writing in secret, at the bottom of a dungeon, loaded with irons. "It was not enough for me to be exiled, banished, and even imprisoned—a prey to sickness,

ness, solitude, and silence—they have even forbidden me to write." How moving this complaint from Tasso! How severe, and terrible that order!—to prevent Tasso from writing!—ye men of mediocrity!—such was Tasso's destiny!—Oh! spare his talents, and forgive!

Fifth LETTER

LETTER LXXXVIII.

ROME.

THE fate of the Jews at Rome is still more miserable than any where else. There are about seven thousand of them, and they can live only in that quarter of the town appointed for them, where they are shut up every evening, the moment it grows dark. This unhappy race is condemned to hear a sermon every week, during which a missionary overwhelms them with injuries, and a *sbirro*, a catch-pole, with hearty cudgellings, if they happen, unluckily, to shew the least want of attention. Besides, every Jew who misses the sermon, pays a fine. The moment a Jew has let the words—*I will embrace the Christian religion*, fall from his mouth, he is instantly sent to the catechumens for two years; and should he shew, during that period, the least reluctance to do it, or the greatest regret for his hasty, and unguarded expression, so much the worse

worse for him, he must stay there the full time. It is easily conceived how miserable the poor Jews are at Rome; their misery touches immediately, on one side, conversion; on the other, death. Strange way of thinking! Jews are persecuted, and teased to embrace Christianity in order to augment it; and were the persecution to succeed, Christianity would be destroyed. The faith of the Christian stands in need of the incredulity of the Jew. It is generally asked—When will the Jews then embrace Christianity?—My question is, When will the Christians embrace toleration?—Christians! when will ye cease to usurp the justice of God? How! ye wretches! ye are incessantly complaining of men, of monarchs, of your destiny, of heaven!—Think on the unhappy Jews!

LETTER LXXXIX.

ROME.

RELIGIOUS ceremonies are very frequent at Rome, but inspire no interest at all; they are without dignity, pomp, or decency. The grand procession of *Corpus Christi* day has no other lustre but the pope and the people. All the monks, rectors, prelates, and cardinals; all the penitents and collegiate fraternities are now in St. Peter's church, and the procession is properly arranging.

While they are making the necessary preparations, I am walking, or rather rolling with the croud, about the church. What murmuring! what noise! what confusion! Torrents of people incessantly coming in and going out of the temple; groups of devout souls eagerly piercing through the crowd, and disputing with one another the happiness of being the next in kissing St. Peter's feet; persons of both sexes, and of all ages, kneeling before confessionals,

fessionals, filled by monks, and receiving the
 absolution of their venial sins from the end of a
 long switch, which the monks shake over their
 heads; young men and women, arm in arm,
 fauntering up and down from tomb to tomb,
 playing their frolicks, and talking love; En-
 glishmen, measuring some remarkable pillar
 with all their solemn gravity; Frenchmen,
 lightly tripping it on their toes, and gaily amus-
 ing themselves; Germans, quite astonished to
 find on the bronze-gates of the first church in
 the universe, the most indecent sculptures;
 cardinals walking upright, and distributing the
 rod of protection through a hedge of abbés, who
 stop short, and bend their bodies down to the
 ground, an attitude expressive of the grossest
 adulation; and beggars, at last, who trying to
 raise emotions of pity, or to fatigue the feel-
 ings of delicacy, persecute the spectators with
 their nudities and wounds. Mean while the
 signal for the march is given!—Behold filing
 off before you filthy penitents, filthy monks,
 and filthy rectors, with a thousand others, in
 their filthy gowns, carrying each a flambeau
 in his hand, and exciting every where, as they
 pass, general laughter, on account of their gro-

tesque accoutrements ! Behold the prelates, the cardinals, and the pontiff ! The latter finds at the bottom of the stairs of a gallery, his military state, who receive him, and the holy sacrament, that waits for him. On a sudden, at the flourish of trumpets, the union of the two powers is accomplished ; the pope and the sovereign join ; the crown and the sacred diadem are incorporated : the pontiff king ascends a kind of alcove, and sits before the sacrament, though, by his posture, and by the manner of ranging the ornaments, he seems to be kneeling : a dozen stout men, hidden under the alcove, bear him on their shoulders. The pope, thus seated, advances, holding the sacrament with both his hands ; his eyes uplifted to heaven, and bedewed with pious tears—he is truly majestic and venerable. The people mutter to one another—*How well his holiness looks !*—All the military follow on horseback, or on foot—The procession has re-entered the church, innumerable flambeaux form two stately resplendent rows, through the whole extent of the aisle, and round the principal altar ; the pontiff descends, crosses, mounts, lays down the holy sacrament,

sacrament, kneels, rises, and gives the benediction.—The ceremony terminates.

A procession of this kind in France has a better and more decent appearance. A sort of respect, at least, accompanies and adorns it. Among the crowd of prelates and cardinals that attend the processions at Rome, you scarcely find a countenance truly breathing, and inspiring religion. The reason is plain.—Opinion never presents to this people any model of the ideal beautiful, which imagination, reason, and sentiment should study; and by which both sexes, of all ranks and classes, ought to form their manners, their behaviour, and their language.

What a difference between the religious festivals of modern Rome, and those of the ancient, where priests crowned with laurels, priestesses entwined with myrtle, young virgins decked with flowers, augurs, flamens, vestals and the venerable or brilliant choice of old age and youth, from amongst the conquerors of the world, accompanied in long-flowing robes, shining with purple and gold, at the sound of citharas, clarions, and timbrels, the solemn gold
and

and ivory statues of Juno, Cybele, Ceres, and Jupiter, majestically descending from the capitol, surrounded by the noble trophies and gorgeous spoils of Asia, borne on cars, drawn by leopards and lions, and followed by a crowd of monarch-people, in which kings remained confounded: they advanced through the streets of the capital of the universe, under triumphal arches, before the statues of great men, before the palaces of the Cæsars, to the Campus Martius, or to the Forum, or to the Pantheon; and thus advancing, in the midst of all the splendour and magnificence of the Roman religion; they seemed to be the gods themselves, whose images they bore, descending in person from Olympus to earth, in order to visit the human race!

LETTER

LETTER XC.

ROME.

I AM not fond of allegorical paintings; their veil must be transparent, and their ornaments but few.

M. le Mierre, to whom poetry is indebted for so many ingenious and beautiful verses, has properly remarked, that "*P'Allegorie habite un palais diaphane!*" Allegory dwells in a transparent palace.

Truth should only hide herself for the purpose of being seen. She may deck herself sometimes, but, like a modest virgin, and not like a courtesan, or a coquette, only for the sake of indicating where to fix the eye, but not for the purpose of seducing it. I have just seen two pictures, where these conditions are properly attended to. The first is an old man, with a black night-cap over his head, counting his money upon a table; his looks thoughtful and

and gloomy. — At his right hand a man of a ripe age, his forehead crowned with laurel, reading and meditating with a serious countenance; at his left, a young man, in a feathered hat, plays on the guitar, and smiles contentedly; whilst behind them at a window, a child full of grace, laughingly, half opens a cage, and calls the birds as they are passing. Do not you perceive the four ages of a man's life!

The second, which is of the same size, and serves as companion to the first, is a little girl, sitting on the ground, and playing very seriously with a doll she is undressing; a young and beautiful woman stands just by her, and looking with complacency in a glass, is carefully adorning herself; a woman of ripe years, modest in her head-dress and garments, sits by her, before a frame, where she is attentively working, without the least anxiety, a piece of embroidery: a little farther, half-stretched in a great arm-chair, and near a chimney, an old woman knitting her brows, with spectacles on her nose, and a book on her knees,

is scolding and coughing. Are not the four
ages likewise of a woman's life very plain in
this second picture?

LETTER

LETTER XCL

NAPLES.

THE Neapolitans say, that after seeing Naples, a man may die contented, for he has nothing finer to see in this world—*Vedi Napoli, e poi mori*; for my part, I am for seeing this mighty wonder, and for living—*Vide Napoli, e poi vivi*.

About eighteen miles at sea, just before Naples, you perceive the islands of Capri.—Horrid Tiberius!—

Two chains of hills embrace this sea, and appear as if extending to join Capri, for the purpose of shutting up the passage to the vessels.

Each of these hills is equally a favourite of nature and of art. If this displays the beauties of Portici, Herculaneum, Pompeia, and numberless country seats; that offers the charming promenade
and

and the beautiful quay of Chiaja, Villa Reale, and a multitude of palaces. On one of them, it is true, reigns, and emits flames and smoke, a volcano, but the laurel of Virgil's tomb rises in verdant bloom on the other. This castle, that juts far into the sea; these palaces that border it; those hills that command the most delightful prospect over it; this Vesuvius, that inflames it by its reverberation; those vessels that furrow it; and those winds that swell it; the isle of Capri that terminates; and, in short, that brilliant sun which passes every day to perform his course from shore to shore.—All these form a scenery, a situation, and an enchantment, impossible to be described.—I am at Naples, and can already easily conceive, that Virgil composed his Georgics at Naples; that some delicate and sensible men, called it Parthenope, comparing it to a beautiful virgin; and that it likewise obtained the surname of Idle; and, indeed, what is there to be done at Naples but to enjoy, and to live!

LETTER

LETTER XCH.

NAPLES.

CAPO DI MONTE castle is less deserving of its renown, than of its name. A king of Naples, I know not which of them, took a fancy, one day, to place a castle on the brow of the mountain, on the back of which rises the capital. Forthwith they dig, they carry up stones, they cut them, they build, and cover the edifice. They perceived not till then, that the whole of this vast building stood upon a quarry, and recourse was had to prodigious efforts in order to support it. But, at last, when the castle was finished, and properly propt up, they discovered that there was no water in the neighbourhood; no convenient way for carriages, and that the palace was at too great a distance for every conveniency. It was soon forsaken, but a few books being scattered about the apartments, some pictures hung to the walls, and a cabinet of medals formed in a spacious room, behold the castle changed

changed into a museum!—*Quid rides!*—Did you ever finish the Louvre?

Capo di monte castle would not deserve the trouble strangers must be at, to obtain permission to see it, were it not for the celebrated Danaë of Titian, and a few pictures of Correggio that invite them. Danaë is certainly very beautiful, but it is always the same woman, that Titian presents to us, now under the name of Venus, now under that of Danaë, or any other beauty. Had Titian never seen but one woman?—Or had he loved but one? Let it be as it will, this painter seems to me, hitherto, the only one that has truly painted human nature; others do but draw it, more or less, faulty, and illumine their drawings. It is not the imagination alone that finds human nature in Titian's pictures; it is the eye itself, and the eye, in order to find it, does not stand in need of being helped by memory, or habit, for there it actually exists. The imagination is so compleat, that it causes no illusion. Had this masterly pencil, which succeeded as well in exhibiting human nature, as others did in exhibiting sky, water, and flowers, served a
fancy

fancy of greater sensibility, what pictures might it not have produced!—But Titian seized the body far better than the soul. He understood but little the language of the passions, and spoke it but indifferently.

Nature had reserved this precious gift for Coreggio—Coreggio! Oh! how well, peculiarly well, did he understand the effects of tenderness! It was on this amiable affection that he poured, in a certain manner, all the others: it was the ground-work of all, for one would actually think that all the personages he has introduced in his pictures were either loving, or had loved. With what natural joy that child laughs! How ingenuously smiles that young girl! The cheeks and the lips of that enchanting creature (examine them well) are actually blowing like flowers.—On those countenances at rest don't you perceive a tender soul? Under those features in motion, are you not following a loving one?—I want to kiss that little child, and take it on my knee. The heart, I do not know by what enchantment, is always affected before Coreggio's paintings; it overflows with unusual and sweet

sweet complacency. In quitting them, our thoughts turn upon objects the most endearing to us. Other painters work from imagination, from reason, from memory, from the head, in short.—Coreggio worked from the heart. He did not compose; he expressed. Painting to him was loving.—Never shall I forget his charming picture of St. Catherine, the Virgin, and the infant Jesus! And in fact, can one forget so lovely, so interesting a saint! With what tender, but respectful complacency, does she implore the divine infant! One may see that she prays to him, solely for the sweet pleasure of praying; for praying is loving. She is, no doubt, voluntarily on her knees—it is her heart that joins her hands. The infant smiles, and looks at his mother, who gazes on her child, and smiles in her turn on the heavenly offspring. How can those two smiles be drawn in any language! By the side of this enchanting group, what battles! what conflagrations! what orgies!—The eye disdainfully runs them over, and finds no inclination to stop, but before the Magdalen of Guido, or the Rachel of Albano. Oh! what beautiful faces! what celestial countenances!

tenances! what virginity in the eyes, the lips, and the forehead of the young Rachel! It would be dangerous for innocence to stand and admire too long this portrait of innocence. Next to it appears one of Guido's Cupids, naked, and asleep; he is charming; just by him, as it was the custom of the ancients, a death's head, and some roses.

I saw likewise with great pleasure several paintings of Schidone, Coreggio's pupil. This painter has shewn, in almost all his productions, the spirit, and in some, the soul of his master. That charming picture of *Charity*, by Schidone, might almost pass for a Guido.—The young woman who distributes some morsels of bread to those poor children, how graceful, and full of goodness! How attentive and joyous the childrens looks!—I cannot say I admire the Venus of Caracci, nor his death of Tancred. I do not like his Armida, nor his Rinaldo. Caracci treats his subjects like an historian; he should have treated them like a poet. In vain did he place Venus in the midst of a thousand Loves; not one accompanies her. How material is every thing!—There are sub-
jects

jects which hardly require a thought to paint them well : they are only to be fancied.

There are several manuscripts, worthy, not of being read, but of being seen ; one in particular, a prayer-book of the Virgin, written on vellum, and embellished with copies in miniature of the paintings of the greatest masters. It is the work of a certain Clovio. Nothing more perfect than the vignettes. You might be tempted to gather these roses, and strawberries, of three hundred years standing—a child would try to catch these butterflies.—This Arabian manuscript is very curious : it is written on the leaves of trees.—I never saw a block of crystal of so prodigious a size as this. The sun's richest and purest flames are darting from it. I remarked several instruments of different arts in use at Otaheite ; and above all a flute, which the inhabitants of that island play upon with their nose.

The collection of copper and gold medals is very considerable. It is as fine, they say, as that of Florence. It gives fresh assurance to our imagination, or rather to our reason, that

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every day occasions more difficulty in believing the wonders of Greece and Rome. I was pleased to review these medals, and examine the difference of the years that lie between them. These are in the chain of time like small points on which the memory reposes. One of them above the rest is very striking: it shews the renowned Mithridates, to whom nature had given a prodigious body.

The collection of cameos is no less valuable: These cameos are perfect miniatures. But how could the hand of man attain such a degree of exact minuteness! On the least of them appears a perfect Alexander. I have perused, with interest and pleasure, sixteen volumes folio of a collection of the best masters' drawings, and the outlines and sketches of their paintings: One likes to view and examine the shoots of the productions of genius.

LETTER

LETTER XCIII.

NAPLES.

YESTERDAY I had a most charming walk. First, I ascended the mountain of Posilipo to the tomb of Virgil. I found it falling to ruin, buried amidst the thorns and briars that accelerate its destruction. A laurel, however, rises in the middle of them. I entered the tomb, and sat among the flowers. I recited the eclogue of Gallus, and read the fourth book of the Eneid. I pronounced the names of Dido and Lycoris, cut a branch of the laurel, and came down, full of those sentiments, with which this sacred place must inspire all hearts that are sensible of nature, of love, and of Virgil. In continuing my walk, I traversed the grotto of Posilipo; that is, a passage under ground of about five hundred fathoms in length, very spacious and lofty, dug through the mountain, in order to shorten the rout from Naples to Pozzuolo—Prodigious effort of labour and perseverance!

This road is paved with lava : it is the work of the Romans. The moment I left the grotto I rambled through fields, covered with high poplars, joined to one another by vines hanging in festoons from their lofty branches, and under which grow in the same year, and rapidly pass in a peculiar manner, three or four different harvests. On a sudden, an enormous mountain opens its sides ; and in the midst of hillocks, shaded with chestnut-trees, and plants of the darkest green, behold a delightful valley ! Here, lie the sulphureous stoves of St. Germain ; there, the ruins of ancient castles ; a little farther, the celebrated Grotto del Cane (the Dog's Grotto), and every where alleys cut in the woods of an immense depth and extent.—In the middle of the valley, in the very mouth of an exhausted volcano, appears the lake d'Agnano, its borders crowned with rows of lofty poplars ; a charming lake, which rolls the purest waves, constantly haunted by flights of aquatic birds, which plunge in, and animate its refreshing streams. I entered first the stoves of St. Germain. In a house built on purpose, sulphureous vapours, more or less strong, rise from the earth, and communicate
to

to several small rooms. The patient remains in the midst of those vapours as long as the species and degree of his malady require.— This is what they call dry-bathing. In some of the rooms I respired with difficulty, and the vapours were so hot as to burn the soles of my feet. The walls are all encrusted with sulphur. A little farther from these stoves, lies the Dog's Grotto : it is an excavation in the rock, hardly large enough to contain three persons. The guide had brought a dog with him. The moment the cave was opened, the poor creature wanted to run away ; but his master took hold of his four legs, and made him lie on one of his sides. In the space of a second, the vapour which the earth exhales from this place, began to act on the animal : his body swelled, stiffened, and visible marks of convulsions appeared ; he had lost all vital motion, and was about to expire. The guide instantly draws him out of the grotto ; exposes him to the fresh air—and behold ! he runs.

The experiment of the pistol did not succeed : on trying to fire it, at two inches from the ground, it went off ; generally, at this distance,

tance, it does not. After leaving the cave, I quitted the guide, and walked alone quite round the lake. I then sat on its borders, looked at its curling waves, and on viewing them I fell into a kind of meditation. I was penetrated with the contrast of the happy calm, sweet murmuring, and insensible undulations of the waters, with the agitation, foaming, and roaring of the sea, which I had quitted a few minutes before. How sweetly enchanted was my heart in that delightful valley! The sky was beautiful and charming; some light silver-tinctured clouds were softening its azure brightness. I looked with pleasure at them as they were passing over my head. Amiable mixture of colours from the waters, the sky, the mountains, and the lively beams of the setting sun, which were sparkling all round, and enlivening the landscape! To all melancholy and tender hearts, who shall visit Naples, let me address this injunction—"Do not fail to sit on the banks of lake d'Agnano."

LETTER

LETTER XCIV.

PORTICI.

PORTICI must be seen, not on account of the king's palace, which has nothing very striking in point of architecture, or exterior ornaments, but on account of its picturesque situation. It stands on Herculaneum, surrounded by flowery lawns, between Mount Vesuvius, which smokes over its head, and the sea that rolls at its feet. Herculaneum, Vesuvius, and the sea, threaten to swallow Portici—the volcano in its lava, the sea in its waves, and Herculaneum in the midst of its ruins.

Portici deserves likewise to be seen, for the marble statues that decorate its peristyle; and chiefly for the equestrian ones of the two Balbi, the monuments of gratitude or flattery; for statues have been lavished at all times, and everywhere. I am not so enthusiastical an admirer, as many *amateurs* are, of the statue that represents the son; he sits upon his horse naturally

enough, but like a rustic, void of grace; his figure is rather vulgar, and the horse, a marble one, appears of real marble. The objects most worthy of your curiosity, are two cabinets, one of antique paintings, and the other of vases, instruments, and statues equally antique. A whole volume could not contain a description of every thing that is truly interesting in the second of these cabinets. It must be owned, that every article in it is ingeniously invented, elegantly wrought, or formed of the most precious materials; besides, every thing is antique and Roman. The Romans had their lamps executed in a particular manner, and with peculiar care. Their forms, and all their ornaments, were animated with human or animal figures, in the composition of which they pleased their taste, or indulged the flights of fancy.

I remarked this among others; at the extremity of a bronze-table rises the trunk of an old tree; it has already lost its leaves, and is going soon to lose its branches: to all these branches are negligently tied, by light links, which suspend them at different heights, and at different

different intervals, seven or eight small bronze-lamps, varied in their size and shape, and sculptured by art in a most wonderful manner. Equal elegance and art are also discernible in the chandeliers, the tripods, and the *letisternia*; and chiefly in a tripod formed by three satyrs, bearing a kind of cistern on their heads; they are really breathing—life may actually be said to be cast in bronze—these instruments of agriculture and surgery are pretty much like ours. Necessity has dictated, very nearly, the same arts, and the same laws, all over the world. This collection of chirurgical, musical, warlike and religious instruments, intermixed with those of agriculture, the kitchen, and for other uses, and presented together in the same place to the eye and the imagination, afford the oddest assemblage. The form of the vases, and particularly of the cups, is quite engaging; one wishes to drink out of them. I sat in a Curule chair, I had never seen any of the *lachrymatories*, those little phials that received the pious drops shed over the tombs. They would certainly make them smaller in our days; but it is still better to make none.

The Romans ran into every extreme; nature was too confined for them; they tried to overleap her bounds on all sides. The idea of the conquest of the universe, the first Roman idea, had given the *ton* to all others, which must have been exaggerated indeed, to be in perfect unison with the original favourite one.

Who would not be surprized, in examining the relics of Herculaneum, to meet with eggs preserved intire; as likewise bread, corn, oil, and wine? I saw, besides, some chafing-dishes, with coals and cinders under them. One is astonished and delighted, that things of so perishable a nature have baffled the irresistible power of so many centuries as have passed over the buried town of Herculaneum. One likes to see a grain of corn triumphing over time, as well as the bronze statue, and gaining its share of eternity with it.

But what strikes and astonishes perhaps still more, are some burnt manuscripts, which preserve in that state the thoughts which have been entrusted to them. Fire devoured only so far, and stayed its fury when it had reached those

those precious writings, leaving just enough of matter to preserve their existence. But how shall they be drawn from thence? How shall the communication, interrupted by the flames, be re-established among them? The means have been found, but they require an incredible patience, a wonderful dexterity, and a number of years.

Every layer of ashes is unrolled by slow degrees, very gently, and with the greatest precaution. In proportion as it is unrolling, a sheet of paper, as light as air, follows behind, keeps close to it, seizes and adheres to it: it receives a line, and then another: sometimes at the end of a month it recovers a page. How careful must they be to prevent the ashes from mixing, when they are stirring them! And how attentive to make these signs, the expressions of thought, preserve their true and exact place, which constitutes all their existence! Of these manuscripts the preserved part is what has been burned; the other, untouched by the fire, has been destroyed. They have in this painful and slow manner, recovered a Greek manuscript on music. The operation might

might have been a little more expeditious, but the whole depends on government.

The bronze-busts, and statues, are for the most part of exquisite taste and excellent workmanship. A sleeping faun, above all, is incomparably well executed—he is really asleep. Two wrestlers likewise have justly attracted my admiration; they are both naked, and are going to wrestle: you are alarmed at the idea of their combat, for you forget that they are of bronze. I have been tempted to address to them this line of M. Roucher—

*Pour des combats plus doux l'amour forme
vos charmes—*

For softer combats love has formed your
charms.

All the apartments of the cabinet are paved with remains of Mosaic work found in Herculaneum. I must not forget mentioning one of the most curious monuments of this renowned cabinet—it is, the fragments of a crust of ashes, which, at one of the eruptions of the volcano, surprized a woman in an instant, and
wapt

wrapt her up entire. These ashes, pressed and hardened by time round her body, have perfectly seized the shape, and moulded it. Several fragments of this kind of plaster, preserve the impressions of the different forms they have received.

One of them exhibits half the breast, which is of perfect beauty; the other preserves the form of the shoulder; another part of the back, &c. They jointly proclaim, that this woman was young, tall, and finely shaped; by these it is likewise plainly seen, that she was running in her shift, as some remnants of it still adhere to the ashes.

LETTER

LETTER XCV.

SALERNO.

THE road from Pompeia to Salerno is delicious. First, you travel on a lava, that flowed some years ago from the top of Vesuvius as far as the sea; then, after passing a little village, called La Cava, you enter a most beautiful valley, planted on each side with lofty trees, and winding about a delightful country. How green those mountains, and how well cultivated! What charming seats scattered here and there! the traveller cannot help imagining, that it is here where man is happy, at least during the summer season: he wishes to stop every where, and enjoy every thing; a thousand rivulets hide themselves and murmur in the mountains; a thousand others appear gliding, in murmurs likewise, along the vale; nothing is heard but the sweet accents of the feathered tribe, and the constant babbling of the brooks and rills: at noon you breathe the fresh
air

air of the evening ; and summer, in this enchanting spot, does not reign, but pass away.

But I see yonder Salerno ! To whom does that pretty house, on the summit of the hill, belong ?—To monks. And this, on the declivity ?—To monks—Heavens ! monks possess then all the territory of Salerno ? There are ten convents of monks, five parishes, a bishopric, two seminaries, a chapter, and ten thousand souls at Salerno. There are so many convents in the town, that there is not a vessel in its harbour. Wretched town ! devoured by insects of all colours, white, grey, black and red. Every house is full of them. The time will come when the Italians, in thoroughly cleansing themselves, will likewise shake off this vermin.

Salerno offers no curious monument, except the portico before the cathedral, truly admirable for its beautiful columns. There are likewise some fine basso-relievos in the church—one of them represents the death of Adonis ; a dying Christ is not far from it. The walls surrounding the altar are filled with votive tablets,

blets, and limbs of human bodies in wax, affected with the disease cured by the miracles expressed in the tablet. One would be apt to think, that a manufactory of miracles has been established in this place.

The folly of having running footmen, has spread from Naples as far as Salerno. I saw two wretched footmen running before a wretched chariot, drawn by two wretched horses, with two wretched gentlemen in it.

Misery, in the garb of shabby finery, is horrible

LETTER

LETTER XCVI.

WRITTEN ON THE PEDIMENT OF A TEM-
PLE AT POESTUM.

NO; it is not possible; I cannot be at Poestum, a town of the Sybarites. Never did they chuse so horrid a desert for their habitation; they never could build a city in the midst of thorns and briars, on so barren a soil, and in a place where the little water to be found, is at the same time stagnated and briny.

Lead me to one of those thickets of roses which still bloom in Virgil's lines—*Biferique rosaria Poesti*. Shew me the pompous baths of alabaster, the rich palaces of marble; let me enjoy their voluptuousness, their elegance, their love, and then you will make me think I am at Poestum. But yet, it is true, that it was the Sybarites who built these three temples, in one of which I am writing this letter, on the ruins of a pediment, that has been standing these two thousand years. How! the works
of

of Sybarites, and existing above two thousand years! But how could the Sybarites then contrive, and set up such a prodigious number of columns of so vile a material, of so rough a work, of such a heavy mass, and of so monstrous a form? The Greek columns did not use to encumber the ground, they lightly mounted; they actually shot up in the air: these, on the contrary, press heavily on the earth—they are falling. The Greek columns had an elegant slender shape, round which the eye was continually in motion; the shape of these is heavy, and widens to the look in such a manner, that it cannot turn round them: our pencils and our chissels, which flatter all monuments, in vain have attempted to render these elegant.

I am inclined to join in the opinion of those who think that these temples are but the first attempts, and not the chief works, of Greek architecture. When the Greeks were constructing these pillars, they were endeavouring to hit on the elegant form of the column. It must be owned, however, that, notwithstanding their rusticity, these temples offer some beauties;

beauties ; they offer at least the simplicity, the unity, and the *tout ensemble*, which are certainly chief beauties of all works : imagination can supply almost all the others, but never these.

One cannot go far in such places without feeling some pleasing emotion. I am walking across desert fields, and dreadful rugged paths, far from all human steps, totally sequestered from mankind, at the foot of craggy mountains, quite barren ; on shores, where the sea roars alone ; and all on a sudden behold a temple !—Behold a second, and a third ! I approach one of them, among the wild grass, and mount the base of a column, or the ruins of a pediment—a cloud of ravens are taking their flight ; cows are heard lowing at the bottom of a sanctuary ; the adder, hidden among the thorny bushes, and the columns, hisses and darts away—but hark ! a young herdsman, carelessly leaning on a cornice, fills with the sound of his rustic reed the deep silence of this extensive desert ! You may judge how savage this place must be when I tell you, that it is not yet forty years since, a huntsman, in pursuing a wild boar, met with these ruins in his way—he found them ;

them; and Poestum may be said now to be inhabited only by English, French, and Russian travellers, and not by the Neapolitans.

The proprietor of it has not been much charmed by the discovery; he is a prince: he has left these temples to destruction. What pity to be forced to leave these solemn abodes so soon, and to end this letter! But the heat is insupportable—no shelter round me. I could wish, however, to carry with me deep in my heart the sensations I have just felt.—Oh! let me still draw from this solitude, from this desert, from these ruins, that awful inexpressible horror which enchants me!—Yes, the active mind loves to run over twenty centuries of past time, amidst the ruins of a Greek town, and on the ground of the voluptuous Sybarites.

LETTER

LETTER XCVII.

NAPLES.

AFTER leaving Poestum, I went to lie at Salerno, whence I arrived yesterday. I made this excursion with prodigious celerity in one of those cabriolets, so common and so numerous at Naples. It was drawn by a single horse, and in two days and a half, I travelled two hundred and twenty miles.

I stopped at Portici to see the cabinet of antique paintings, and the theatre of Herculaneum.

Mount Vesuvius covered Herculaneum, in that eruption, not only with ashes, as it did Pompeia, but with layers of very thick lava. Herculaneum has remained buried for sixteen centuries, and chance, which, together with genius, has alone the privilege of drawing the veil of nature, and of time, has lately discovered it. In order to see this theatre, you must go down under very damp vaults by the light of flam-
 2 beaux,

beaux, and wander a long time through the galleries and the boxes, and up and down the stairs of a circular amphitheatre of an immense circumference. You cannot help admiring, as you pass, the solidity and stupendous mass of this grand monument, built to resist the shocks of a thousand ages; but not the irresistible one of Vesuvius. After many windings, you arrive before the stage: on each side of it appears a pedestal with this inscription—*Claudio & Papi-rio Consulibus Herculaneses posuere post mortem.* It is exactly the inscription—To Lewis XIV. after his death.

The cabinet of antique paintings, drawn from the excavations of Herculaneum, Pompeia, and Stabia, is very interesting. These paintings, however, some *al fresco*, others in oil, and several incrustated in the marble, are placed either in an unfavourable light, or beyond the reach of the eye; they escape admiration. The animals are drawn with astonishing elegance and striking truth. As for the fruits and flowers—have they gathered them?—The ornaments are real ornaments, for you hardly think them so: you would take the greatest part of them to be

Raphael's

Raphael's sportful effusions of taste; and some of them, the fanciful productions of a Chinese imagination. I remarked a small waggon drawn by two bees; a butterfly sitting as waggoner, and holding the reins with his feet; another, drawn by a parrot, and driven by a grasshopper; and a third, loaded with an ewer twisted with roses, and drawn by two syrens. The pencil has happily realized all these pretty fancies.

The greatest part of the large pictures are likewise of Greek composition, that is, very simple, but of surprising delicacy. Here you see a centaur tamed by Love—there a nymph plucking a flower—yonder a charming naked Bacchalian, stretched upon a sea-monster, to whom she offers drink—a little farther, a Dryad surprised in her sleep, and embraced by a Faun—Next to her a dancer, who displays on a rope all the address and vigour of the human body.—Opposite to him his beautiful companion, who, under the most transparent veil, presents all the grace and voluptuous attitudes of a female form.—Look at old Silenus again lifting up a child in his arms, who stretches his little hands

towards a bunch of grapes, tendered to him by a charming girl, over the head of the old man ! — Look at that young man, who, while a beautiful young woman is talking and smiling upon him, follows, with eyes full of love, the smiles and accents on the lips of his beloved object. Every one of these pictures you see is only a thought ; in the same manner as every ode of Anacreon is but a sentiment.

LETTER

LETTER CL

WRITTEN ON THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT VESUVIUS, BY THE LIGHT OF AN ERUPTION, AT MIDNIGHT.

I HAVE traced these few lines on the top of Mount Vesuvius, by the light of its eruption. I have in a certain manner struck a medal to attest my journey; to recal one day to the mind of such of my children as may one day wish to be present at this wonderful conflagration, this epoch of their father's life; and by this remembrance, to render still more beautiful to their eyes this magnificent scene. Hear then a short description of my nocturnal excursion.

At Refina, a small village on this side Portici, I left my carriage, and got upon a mule. Three stout fellows accompanied me with a vast number of flambeaux. Gently ascending, we passed through fields covered with tall poplars, and fig and mulberry trees, interwoven with

supple and strong vines, now leaning and hanging round those trees, and now mounting and supporting themselves in the air. I was shewed, as I went along, Pergolese's retreat, where he was wont to repair for the purpose of indulging his happy, but fatal, pensive turn, the cause of his immortal *fiabat mater*, and his death, when but seven and twenty years old.

After crossing, for the space of an hour, beautiful orchards and well cultivated fields, we came to an immense lava, vomited by the volcano, about sixty years ago. It made the town of Naples look aghast at the approach of such a fiery flood, which, however, after having threatened a moment, stopped there: but though it has ceased flowing, and is totally extinguished, it still affrights and threatens. The borders of this lava are embellished, like those of the Seine, with grass plats and flowers, and shaded here and there by some shrubs constantly moistened and nourished by this fruitful ashes. After having followed for some time a very difficult path, I found that my mule was walking on rugged cliffs, and in the midst of moving ashes. There the earth ceases to bear the foot of animals,
but

but not that of man, who has discovered almost all the bounds prescribed to him by nature, and often overleaped them. There was I forced to clamber up heaps of drossy substances, sinking under my steps. I stopped a while in order to view the prospect. The shades of night, and the clouds, were thickening before me with the black smoke of the volcano, and fluctuating round the mountain: behind me, the sun precipitating beyond the mountains, was covering with his dying rays the coast of Posilipo, Naples, and the sea, whilst the moon appeared on the horizon over the island of Capri, so that I could see at that instant the tremulous surface of the sea-waves, sparkling at once by the light of the sun, of the moon, and of Vesuvius. How noble and awful these prospects!

After I had contemplated this obscurity, and this splendour, this dreadful appearance of sterile nature, and this smiling, animated, fertile prospect—the empire of death, and that of life—I pierced through the clouds, and continued to ascend.

Behold me at length arrived at the crater. Is this then that formidable volcano which has

been burning so many ages, which has swallowed up so many towns, consumed so many people—which threatens every moment to destroy this extensive country—this same Naples, where the inhabitants are, at this instant, laughing, singing, and dancing—nay, not even casting a single thought on its rising flames!—What a light round the crater! What a burning furnace in the middle! The fiery gulph begins to growl within.—Hark! how dreadful and horrid the crash!—Behold that immense whirlwind of flames striking across that thick shower of blazing ashes!—Millions of sparks ascend into the air—millions of stones, distinguished by their black colour, are hissing, falling, rolling, and falling again.—There is one rolling down the mountain, about thirty yards from me! On a sudden the fathomless abyss shuts itself up with a tremendous crash.—On a sudden it opens again, and emitting streams of blazing matter, forms in an instant another conflagration: the lava rises on the borders of the crater—it swells, it boils—it froths, it flows—and long streams of fire furrow the black sides of the mountains.

Quite

Quite in extasy, I gazed at all those awful objects.—The height, the desert, and the blazing mountain! Add to this the horrors of the night—and I was there!—I could have wished to pass the night near such a conflagration, and see the sun eclipse it, at his return, with the splendour of his refulgent rays: but the wind, that blew very cold, had already frozen my limbs; I descended, but alas! with what regret! with what reluctance, with what sorrow, does one take off that lingering look, which must be the last, from such a scene!

Farewell ye awful scenes! Farewell Vesuvius! Adieu to thy lavas, and to thy blazing flames, which irradiate and crown the top of thy profound abyfs!—Farewell again thou ignivomous mountain, so dreadful, and yet so little dreaded! If it is written above, that thou art to bury under thy ashes those palaces, those villages, or that city, oh! let it not happen when my children are there!

The guides had lighted their flambeaux. I descended, or rather rolled down, with my legs half immersed in ashes, and yet so quickly (for

one cannot do otherwise), that I was but half an hour in descending a piece of ground, I had been three hours in climbing up. One of my shoes, torn in a thousand pieces, I lost about midway, the other, at the place where I had quitted the mule. I met some Englishmen, who were mounting to the crater: we rested awhile, and conversed about Mount Vesuvius: we suspended, for a moment, with the light of our flambeaux, the sable veil of night, extended over that immense sheet of lava; and with the sound of our voices, the awful and deep silence that reigned all round us. We took leave and parted at last; I pursued my rout, and arrived at Portici very much fatigued. I went to bed immediately, and slept very soundly till six o'clock in the morning, when I awoke with the top of Vesuvius, its crater, its lava, and its conflagration before my exalted imagination. The soul was still agitated, still shuddering, at the different emotions it felt a few hours before. The eruption of Vesuvius is one of those grand spectacles, which no pencil or language can ever delineate. Nature seems to have reserved the privilege of displaying

displaying it alone, for the admiration of mankind, as she does the rising of the sun, and the immensity of the ocean.

H 5. LETTER

LETTER CH.

NAPLES.

THIS letter, with others, which I shall have the pleasure to address to you, will contain some strictures on the inhabitants of the kingdom of Naples.

The first thing that struck me, after having examined the human species in Italy, is, that the species is the same in all civilized countries, excepting England alone, for there it is free. Every where else it is the same at the bottom; it differs but little in point of forms, and varies only in a greater or lesser degree: but these variations are difficult, to say the truth, to determine, on account of the imperfections of signs, and the want of proper measures; for were we to examine justly the greatest part of the expressions we have been employing, for a long time, in the commerce of our thoughts, we should see that they can hardly now be applicable to things; so much have

have they changed every where. The common phrases of a language stand in need of being re-coined now and then, as our currency does ; but the great writers and philosophers, who alone possess the proper die to strike them with, are extremely rare.

The population of the kingdom of Naples, in the inhabited places, is prodigious ; it is owing to the fineness of the climate, the fertility of the soil, and of the sex : their manners likewise contribute to it very much. The inhabitants of this country live at little expence, upon little, and long—At little expence, because the heat of the climate represses very much the keenness of hunger ; and, if it excites the eagerness of thirst, it multiplies the means of allaying it : the Apennines slake the thirst of the Neapolitans with their snows, the sea nourishes them with its fish, and the ashes of Vesuvius supply them with fruit and corn : the climate furnishes garments.—As they do not work much, and sleep a good deal, they can live upon little ; sobriety and repose at Naples protract amazingly their lives ; they live, therefore, a long time. Life wears out much faster in France, where labour, the passions, and

misery, are continually harrassing it. Besides, diseases are extremely rare in this country; for the relaxation, occasioned by the heat, prevents chronic disorders, and the perspiration arising from the same cause, generally cures most of the acute ones.—Add to this, that there are mineral waters almost every where, and hardly any where a physician. Human vegetation possesses, therefore, at Naples, all its fecundity, all its vigour, and all its natural duration; and it is owing to this, that the population of this town is so immensely great. It is visible whenever you stir. Every where you pierce through a crowd, every where you are afraid of crushing an infant; the squares, the streets, the shops, and the houses, seem overflowing with inhabitants. This immense population, always in motion, or rather running all over the town, is continually interrupted by a multitude of carriages, and chiefly by small calashes, which do not run, but fly; and yet few accidents happen in the streets of Naples. The hurried motion of *la rue St. Honoré* at Paris, cannot be compared to that of *la Strada di Toledo* in this capital. When you enter that street in the evening, the great quantity of flambeaux borne before

before a multitude of carriages, by an incredible number of running footmen, present you with the aspect of a magnificent funeral procession.

LETTER

LETTER CHII.

NAPLES.

CLIMATE exerts all its influence in this place: here reign, without any contradiction, the sun's legislation and power; that is, an universal relaxation in all that refers to civil, political, and natural life. Nothing is performed that cannot be done without a certain degree of tension in the fibres, as there are voices which cannot reach the octave. Religion is but superstition; besides, it is very convenient: saying that you have some, will pass very well for religion. One fourth of the people never hear mass. They seldom kneel at church. They frequent it only when there are illuminations and music—that is, when it is opera-day at such a church. Every body is allowed to speak, to preach, to declaim loudly, against all sorts of religion, and even against the catholic one. Religion goes as far as superstition, but not up to fanaticism; for that proclaims an energy of mind. The flambeau
of

of religion neither enlightens, nor burns, in this region.

The fair sex in Naples seem to exercise a constant trade. Fathers and mothers, husbands and brothers, monks, and every body, publicly deal in it. The Neapolitans have a peculiar manner of cheating, and they generally do it laughing. All the commerce of life is, to them, a game where the most cunning is sure to win; elsewhere it is commonly the strongest. They will own, nay boast, at Naples of having cheated, as they do in other places of having won. This scandalous manner of dealing retards very much the progress of daily occurrences; for they are meditating and pausing, at every step, as is done at every move in playing at chess. Very little business is in general transacted: promises are but words; nothing is binding but formal writings, and each writing involves a law-suit. The Neapolitans are very fond of chicanery; they love it as they do a game at cards; they go to law for the purpose of passing away time, and defrauding. No morals in their ideas, not even in their sentiments. Probity appears to them a trick of the mind;
frankness

frankness a vivacity of temper: their wit consists in trying to deceive; their ingenuity in succeeding: virtues are inabilities, and vices are owing to the climate. Sensibility is but mechanical. At the sight of a murdered man, and the murderer, pity will shew itself for the former, but soon declare for the latter. Revenge is a kind of natural right in this country; it is the only real passion they know. Laziness excludes avarice; love is but a natural want; a woman is like a piece of furniture; a lover is only the man who buys it. It is not their children they love, but their little ones: this love goes a great way. Libertinism does not produce, in all the extent of the kingdom, more than a thousand foundlings a year. Often the husbands, who can get no children, apply to the foundling hospital, where they can buy some. These children are their play-things at first, then their slaves, and at last their heirs. Filial tenderness subsists only by habit; friendship by hope; and gratitude is but a mere word. They work only with an intent to be enabled to live one day without doing any thing. Happiness here consists in doing nothing. From early morning till noon, the coffee-houses, the shops,

shops, the promenades, and all the public squares, are full of all sorts of people, monks, abbés, officers, &c. who are gaping, reading the newspapers, and looking at the multitude as they pass by. As the Neapolitans cannot excite in themselves any sensations by reflection, they demand some from every object: they must absolutely be taught to feel, as children are taught to walk. At twelve o'clock they go to dinner. Few, as the saying is, *lay the cloth*; and after vanity has carefully shut the street-door, they eat a mouthful in a corner. When the stomach is full, they lie down, generally quite naked: an hour before sun-set they get up, dress again, return to the coffee-house, or step into a coach to take a ride at the promenade. It is then that the swarm of running footmen begin their flight, and fill the town. The profession of fifteen thousand beings at Naples, is that of running before a carriage, and that of fifteen thousand more of standing behind one. The promenade is generally *al Molo*, at Chiaja, or along the Posilipo coast; never out of Naples, and never on foot. A gentleman would not dare to appear, in the evening, in the streets of Naples on foot—he would be dishonoured.

dishonoured. The company remain at the opera-house, at the promenade, at a tavern, or a gaming-house, till five o'clock in the morning. You do not find on their countenances either joy, contentment, or pleasure—and, to say the truth, neither do you observe any trouble. The sovereign good, as I said before, is to do nothing during the day, and to breathe in the evening. The fever occasioned by heat, abates in the evening, and that is sufficient for being well. Very few know how to enjoy nature, which is delightful; they have not sufficient strength for it. Nature has no admirers in this country; the whole nation seem cloyed with so many charms. The greatest part of the people work only to earn what is necessary not to starve. Such people are called Lazaroni, but do not form any particular class: there are some in every station—they are what we call idle fellows. But, after all, the reason why they work but little is, that they have little need to work in order to live. It is not a vice in them, but temperance. Who would work in this world, were it not for the hopes of working no more! When a Lazaroni has earned in a few hours enough to live upon for a few days, he goes

to rest, to bathe, he takes a walk—he lives. The women are very ugly at Naples. The beauty of the fair sex is a flower that requires a moist air, and a temperate climate. All those lucky traits, which nature seems to have chosen to form beauty, are soon altered at Naples, being attacked at once by the climate, by education, and by manners. These same influences, however, in depriving the fair sex of their charms, seem to have bestowed them on the men, who are in general rather handsome.

LETTER

LETTER CIV.

NAPLES.

THE fine arts are no longer known at Naples—music must, however, be excepted, for in many *conservatori* (academies for music), they labour more than ever, and with emulation, to cultivate the voice. Laws, bulls, and nature, have forbidden, but in vain, to carry the voice of man to *so natural* a pitch by castration. Sound is nobly rewarded here! and those who have the good fortune to be able to form it, are highly distinguished and honoured!—Farinelli has swayed the scepter of both Spains. Naples can still boast of great men—they are the *castrati*.

Mechanical arts are still in their infancy; instruments, the most common in other parts of Europe, are wanting in this country. They are eight days about a piece of work, that would be finished in France in an hour. Commerce,

merce, military service, and a little of industry and culture, are in the hands of foreigners. The natives, however, begin now to enter into the spirit of activity and trade. They are waiting this moment for a vessel, the first that has ever dared to sail for a cargo of sugar and indigo, directly to one of our ports. The captain of that ship will be a Columbus in Naples.

This year has seen the first Neapolitan newspaper. But how does it happen, that so small a state can subsist, overcharged with an immense population, a swarm of beggars, a prodigious number of servants, a considerable number of both regular and secular priests, with twenty thousand men and upwards for the defence of the kingdom, a crowd of noblemen, and an army of thirty thousand persons employed in the administration of justice?—The sea, the climate, and the soil, solve the problem: the climate by reducing all wants; the sea by affording plenty of fish on all sides; and the soil by yielding annually four different harvests. To remove the earth, or rather the ashes, is real tillage. These ashes are extremely

ly fruitful at the foot of Mount Vesuvius; they would be still more so, were they not enticed, but assisted. This should be the work of government, but they do not seem inclined to it. Far from opposing the soft and enervate life of the Neapolitans, they encourage it. The climate, no doubt, inclines the human species to idleness, but not so violently, however, as to prevent the moral and political influences from acting; they might repress their idleness, and compel them to work. The springs of the mind might be braced by proper laws, and the excess of the heat *neutralized*, if I may be allowed the word, by education and bathing, as the Romans had done it. But there is not here a single public bath. Genius is, by no means, rare at Naples: the climate, as well as its physical situation, are favourable to it. This sea, this land, this sun, a look of Augustus, and the reading of Homer, produced the *Æneid*. But now, out of a hundred persons, you will hardly find two that can read: whole provinces in this kingdom are without a school-master. The literature, that circulates among a small number of persons is but little, and confined to some translations of French works.

It

It is we, who furnish, at present, to Italy fashions for women, and ideas for men: all our best writers are known, translated, and compiled. I have found Mr. Necker's book in the mind, the esteem and conversation of whoever will take the pains, or feel the necessity of thinking. Mr. Necker is proclaimed here, as the founder of provincial assemblies in France—posterity will do the same. At Naples they are constantly talking of Paris. The French are now the Greeks of the universe, and the English the Romans. The distance, the imagination, and above all our discontent, give many advantages to our nation. All I have been mentioning, however, must be understood within a narrow sphere of the inhabitants of Naples.

A word more on the condition of the people. Misery produces no beggars, no soldiers, and very few foundlings in this town—their manner of living is so easy, so natural. It is neither the cause of many professed robberies, or many murders. Filching may be more properly called slight of hand, than stealing—when the people see any body do so, they laugh, and let

let him do it. Revenge alone excites man to murder at Naples. Debauchery may be ascribed more to idleness than to voluptuousness. There are many women of the town, but nothing characteristic distinguishes them—they mix with the rest of their sex. Debauchery is the cause of fewer crimes and misfortunes here than any where else—far less than at Paris. The reason is, that it is neither a profession nor an art. Nothing has yet been refined, depraved, or improved in this kingdom. Vices and virtues are still in their rough state, and as if just now sprung from the human heart. Naples does not yet pretend to attract the looks of Europe, nor those of futurity.

LETTER

LETTER CV.

NAPLES.

GOVERNMENT is such in this kingdom, that it may really be looked upon as an additional disorder. The sovereign authority is still wavering, in a great measure, between the king, the pope and the barons, but chiefly between the barons and the king. The struggle of these small individual powers of the barons, against the preponderating one of the king, is not yet at an end; but it will not last long—this is the fate of all powers, that whenever a predominant one exists, it draws to itself, and devours, all the others at last. The history of every civil society, contains but the history of this phenomenon, which however happens in more or less time, agreeably to the primitive elements of each society, or according to the greater or less divisions of those powers, at its beginning: for all societies in their different systems of democracy, aristocracy or monarchy.

chy tend, more or less rapidly, to despotism, as rivers in valleys, on hills or mountains, tend to the sea. The barons can still imprison their vassals by orders bearing this clause—*for reasons to us best known*. They even can have their vassals killed with impunity. It is chiefly in Sicily where the barons are real tyrants. Not a year ago they used to preach, that the true sovereigns were the barons—their prayers at mass were for the barons. The Marquis of Caraccioli, formerly ambassador in France and England, and the present viceroy, did every thing in his power, but not without danger and courage, to annex the remains of the barons' power to the royal authority; and would have succeeded, had government shewed more firmness or address. The monarch may disarm the barons whenever he pleases by ribbons, places and pensions, and without any Cardinal Richelieu: the barons go to the king of Naples's court of their own accord. But suppose the monarch's authority to be quite sovereign, will it be more absolute? No, for it is quite despotic. The king can already do almost every thing, however oppressive and destructive, for he has a large military force, and

and his subjects are cowards: but he can hardly do any thing for protecting and creating. I will give but one instance, with a proof of the cowardice of the Neapolitans. One of their viceroys was fond of shooting; unluckily for the inhabitants of the little island of Procida, some pheasants happened to settle there. A martial law immediately was issued, ordering a general massacre of all the cats. The inhabitants killed them all, and the rats multiplied to such a degree, that they dared to attack with impunity children in their cradles—their noses and ears were often found gnawed by those loathsome vermin. What did the parents do then?—The mothers wept, and the fathers complained, and that was all. So great were their cowardice and supineness! By good luck the viceroy died, and it was no longer a misfortune to be a mother in the isle of Procida. M. de —, who seems to have travelled only for the purpose of flattering, says, that the viceroy was really moved at the tears and complaints of the inhabitants. That is not true: they used to offer their prayers to God, begging of him (these were their expressions) to soften the heart of their viceroy.—O vile and coward race!

race! Why did they not harden theirs! or rather, why had they not more feeling hearts for their tender infants?—What right have people to complain, when they carry slavery farther, than princes do tyranny?

LETTER

LETTER CVI.

NAPLES.

I SAID in the preceding letter, that the king had not power to protect or create. It is true; for what can a monarch do with such scanty revenues, with so ignorant a people, and with a nation submitted to him more through the habit of suffering a master, than by the necessity, inwardly felt, of having a king? Such a submission will only bear such and such things from the master, and be at an end, the moment any innovations happen.— Besides, as it proceeds more from inactivity than oppression, the king must not meddle with it, or derange it. The public opinion here redresses no evil, and encourages no good: to say the truth, it does not yet exist in this country. Authority deters only with the bayonet, rewards only with gold, and inflicts only punishments.

The climate, in short, prevents all tension in the organs, all energy in the desires, and the succession of ideas. How then can a monarch create or improve? Many changes have been tried, but in vain, in the general administration; the very instruments they employ are the first to obstruct them. Despotism may have satellites, it is true, but not zealous servants. All that authority could do by establishing different departments, &c. has certainly been done: names have been created, and no government in the world seems better conducted than this—in the *royal almanack*. Naples has no constitution as yet, and perhaps will never have one: all political, as well as civil order, exists but by prescription, and both are the consequences of the climate, of fortune, and of situation.

The climate requires a king at Naples, and perhaps even a despot. This kingdom has always yielded to force, from whatever quarter it came; but it must be a present one, and act with an immediate power. I have heard somebody congratulate the prince upon the state of the affairs I have been describing to you. How
unlucky

unlucky for princes, did I say to myself, to prefer a submission of necessity, to an obedience of opinion! When no political body contains the sovereign authority, and retains it within its orbit! Princes do not love to meet with resistance, but yet one cannot rest but on something that resists.—If the sovereign authority is weak, and circumscribed in doing good, it has, on the contrary, an unbounded power to do ill: it can exile, dispossess, and impose taxes at pleasure—but what do I say? taxes in this kingdom are but contributions; they are exacted. This very authority prevents law-suits from being brought to an end; for he who has an absolute command over all, cannot have a particular will for any thing. There is a circumstance, however, that moderates the despotism of the orders; it is the contrariety of those very orders: one cannot breathe a moment in the midst of them; for the king, by continually speaking, is no longer heard; and, by continually commanding, nothing is executed. All the ministers are for ever at variance; every one employs the king, in his turn—nay sometimes they lend him to one another.

With such people, such means, and such ministers, administration must certainly be vicious. In regard to foreign affairs, I shall only say, that the cabinet is incessantly wavering between Austria and Spain: it generally bends towards Austria. Do you wish to know the mighty importance and weight of France at the court of Naples?—The king and queen are just gone to Tuscany by sea. As they were to embark for Leghorn, one of the handsomest ships was chosen, and the king's cabin lined with the best prints that could be found. What prints do you think were chosen?—those that represented the advantages the English had, in the last war, over France and Spain.

The administration of the finances in this country, as in many others, consists in ransacking provinces, and rifling the public treasury. Men in office compound with the smugglers. In regard to the navy, a great one would be useless, but le Chevalier Acton, who is at the head of that department, could wish to be able to say one day to the English, as Marshal de Castries did in France—*our navy*; and the money of the treasury runs into the sea. They are

are now building a ninety gun ship; it is almost finished, and the harbour, destined to receive it, is begun. The war department is in a ruinous condition.—At Naples a court, an opera, an army! what pomp and luxury!—But is commerce well administered at least? “I have every vice, says publicly, l’Abbé Galliani; each of which must be paid for; a good deal of money therefore is wanting for my own use.” L’Abbé is at the head of the board of trade.

LETTER CIV.

NAPLES.

OF all the parts of administration, the most corrupt is certainly that of justice. There are too few of what there are great abundance in France, viz. superior magistrates. There are but one and twenty.— They form five chambers of four members each, successively presided in by the chief. There is besides *il vicariato*, which is a head-court, and a supreme tribunal, called the royal chamber. The other courts are the barons' tribunals.

The major part of the law-suits are forced to pass through six degrees of jurisdiction, before they can reach the throne ; and they are often sent back to run over again the same tribunals. The magistrates publicly sell justice—the reason is, that they are made by the court, paid by the king, and too few in number, and taken from the class of lawyers, where they
used

used to gain a great deal—but the most substantial and decisive reason is, that the ministry find their account much better in appointing corrupt magistrates.

No where is the supreme magistracy so generous, so honourable, and so pure, as in France; and no where is the profession more nobly supported.—But the venality of places in France! said a lawyer to me one day.—Woe to those republics, replied I, where magistrates must be chosen from among the rich; and woe to those monarchies where they can be taken from among the poor! With plebeian officers, and poor magistrates, the monarch soon becomes a despot, and the despot, a tyrant.

I have been to hear their manner of pleading several times. Five judges are seated round a table in a small room: the lawyers brawl, and the judges in the mean time amuse themselves, by turns, with their handkerchief, the fan, and the nosegay, which stands before each of them. After the lawyers have done pleading, one of the judges resumes the cause

in a very audible voice; but the others do not listen to him: such a report is only made for the sake of form. When that is over, the company are ordered to retire, and the report is begun again: the judges then pay attention to the subject, and pass their sentence, which they do, without much deliberation, as it has perhaps to undergo ten revisions. These unlucky judges are under the command of all the ministers: you see them dancing attendance in all the ante-chambers; they pass their lives in giving an account of their decisions: they are really to be pitied. They form no particular class amongst them; but this is perhaps the only good that results from the composition of the tribunals. Judges are generally chosen at Naples from amongst the old men, as elsewhere from amongst the young ones. Three of the five counsellors, who compose the royal chamber, are at this time eighty years old; one of them is ninety-four. Their age must necessarily be a great obstruction to the celerity of determination: the multiplicity of forms is likewise a considerable impediment; and the uncertainty of a proceeding solely formed by a

2 precarious

precarious jurisprudence, and the arbitrary orders of the king, must impede still more.

'Tis for this reason that lawyers and attorneys are daily multiplying. They reckon for the kingdom of Naples alone, not including Sicily, thirty thousand of them for about four millions of justiciables. Some of them get fifty thousand livres a year, not on account of their knowledge or integrity, but through their happy talent for intrigue, and their easy access to the judges.

The pleadings I have seen printed are in a pedantic, inflated style; no eloquence, through want of virtue; and no virtue, through want of liberty. How different this bar from that of France!—The law-suits are innumerable, and often last many ages: they generally end, like conflagrations, by consuming the plaintiffs and the defendants. All the younger branches of the nobility are brought up to the bar: every noble family stand in need of a *champion*, well acquainted with chicanery, to defend their property in the courts. The noise that reigns in the halls of the *vicariato* beggars all description.

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All

All the law-people, without exception, counsellors, attorneys, and clerks, have an office in them—chicanery has chosen her residence in that den. Lawyers of the first order, who are upwards of four hundred, have a distinguished superiority. I have seen the inferior ones, as well as the clients, taking hold of their hand and kissing it. These lawyers have the privilege of a censure that remits and proscribes at pleasure. Strange, that the regimen of an order, charged to protect citizens against oppression, should be despotic! but it is by no means very severe. A lawyer had the boldness to say in a printed memorial—*Do not we know that the king is a meer polichinella (Punch), who has no will of his own!*—This memorial was not even censured.

Criminal justice is not better administered than civil. Impunity may really be purchased. Commitments to prison are very frequent, but, whether owing to corruption, to indolence, to the spirit of the nation, or to all these reasons together, they punish but seldom, and scarcely ever with death.

Would

Would you believe it! They reckon in the kingdom of Naples between four and five thousand murders every year, and but three or four executions. But, to make amends for this mildness, their imprisonment is a terrible punishment. No culprit can come out of prison, generally speaking, until the expiration of four years; three-fourths of them perish in it; those whom the length of the trials, and the horror of the dungeons, cannot destroy, are delivered over by justice to the galleys.—The law requires the culprit's confession of the crime, to authorize a capital sentence: while he denies it, he is confined in a dungeon, and deprived of light—they even take from him the *comfort* of straw—the wretch must lie on the bare stones, and live on bread and water, if that can be called living.

I had one of those tombs opened to me.—Forthwith three or four spectres, with meagre bodies, half naked, long beards, ghastly visages, and eyes sunk in their sockets, quite astonished and dazzled at a glimpse of light, that hardly guided me, started to the threshold.—I recoiled with horror.—A pestilential vapour was ex-
haling

haling from that grave—There had they been buried ten years ! I was tempted to cry out to them—*are you alive ?* One of them boldly advanced, and exclaimed with a furious air—*No, I have not murdered my father.*—He had actually murdered his father, but had not then owned it.

The moment a malefactor is condemned to death, he is confined for three successive days before the execution, in a subterraneous chapel, between a confessor and some penitents ; and indeed in the presence of death. Three days ! Alas ! how long the agony ! What pangs, what heart-felt anguish must not the wretch endure, ere the expiration of that time !—for sure, the greatest pain of death is, that of expecting it !—This reflection seems to contradict the respite of a month, allowed at present in France for capital punishments ; but respecting always the good intentions and opinion of government, on this subject, I only refer to experience, and submit my apprehensions to their superior judgment.

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The hospital is one of the rooms in the prison ; it likewise is a kind of tomb. We must do justice, however, to the laws of this kingdom ; they allow the criminals a counsel ; it is a magistrate, who is called *Parrucato dei poveri* (the advocate for the poor), but his business is with the trial, and he has no intercourse with the delinquent. Besides, this advocate is not of his own choosing. Criminal justice is in no country, perfectly generous. Nay, often in the struggle between the magistrates, and the arraigned, justice which punishes murder, murders them. How necessary is it, and devoutly to be wished, that a reform may be introduced every where !—How tyrannical are bad laws ! But above all, bad criminal laws !

LETTER

LETTER CV.

NAPLES.

I HAVE not yet spoken of the government of Sicily, which is under an administration, laws, and manners, totally different from these. That beautiful part of the kingdom of Naples's dominions, where flourishes a population of a million of men; where nature has lavished her treasures; that fertile island, which once supplied abundance of provisions to the Romans, and gave to Athens, to Rome, and to the universe, so prodigious a number of masterly pieces in all the fine arts, has been abandoned for ages to viceroys, and to mount Etna. The Marquis of Carraccioli, by an intrigue at court, was lately chosen viceroy of that island. He attacks all abuses, sword in hand; but others, far more obnoxious, and vigorous, are daily shooting up again: he should wait, and trust to time; but he is in haste to enjoy, as his vice-royalty is almost at an end.— The Sicilians are looked upon at Naples, as foreigners;

foreigners ; and at court, as intruders and enemies.

Government are of opinion, that they can rule over them, by distressing them ; and that, in order to make faithful subjects of them, they must be enslaved. Sicily is looked upon by the ministry, in every respect, as an overgrown troublesome kingdom : the court sees but Naples ; great capitals are, at the feet of thrones, like high mountains before the provinces.—But how can the affairs of the nation still go on at Naples with so little police, so bad a legislation, and such an administration ? Human nature does not seek to do evil, for the pleasure of doing it, but with a view to the obtaining of some good : now doing good at Naples occasions less evil, than in any other country : in warm climates a negative happiness is sufficient ; but, on the contrary, in temperate ones, positive happiness is quite necessary : in warm countries, not to suffer is sufficient to the desire of being well ; in temperate ones, pleasure is likewise required ; and it is incontestibly true, that the greatest part of the most heinous crimes are committed, not
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in consequence of pain and misery, but of ambition and pleasure.

This is, in a few words, what reconciles the few disorders that happen, and the little police, that reigns in this kingdom. The *climate*, in a certain degree, supplies the place of the police, as the *knife* at Rome, and *spies* at Paris.

The king, who is goodness itself, is determined to try the means of governing well. It is said, that the queen's intellectual faculties equal her graces; and her majesty is very graceful. If these sovereigns fell into some errors, at the beginning of their reign, they were very excusable. They were abandoned, at the age of fifteen, to the passions of youth, and the burden of a throne; and just out of the hands of old Spanish ministers, who had taught them to play with the crown, and not to wear it: they kept from them the instructive lesson how to reign.

LETTER

LETTER CVI.

NAPLES.

I SHALL collect in this letter several detached objects I have seen. How could I omit, for instance, the twelve prophets that Lo Spagnoletto painted on the vault of the Carthusian church—but why should I say painted? he has actually placed them there; the illusion is so complete. Their heads; how characteristically fine! I really think I have now seen prophets. These portraits are certainly the master-pieces of that great painter; nay, a master-piece of painting. Lo Spagnoletto's pencil is rather gloomy and severe, it is true; but it is vigorous, and boldly aims, as that of Caravaggio, to strike with terror, and astonish the eye by contrasts, rather than to move or flatter it by gradations and shades; Lo Spagnoletto lavishes his light and shade. The Carthusians' convent, so opulent in every other respect, would be rich enough in these twelve pieces of painting. Government seem to be of the same opinion,

opinion, for they lay pretty heavy contributions now and then on those monks. Why should that picture of Solimenes, representing Heliodorus driven from the temple, be so much extolled? It is immense, for it occupies all the breadth of the nave of the church of Gesù Novo; but how confused its composition! No selection, no effect, no interest:—they are but figures and colours. What an epitaph have they dared to trace over Sincero Sannazaro's tomb! He who passed his life on Parnassus, in courts, in camps, and died in a convent; who composed a poem on the child-birth of the Virgin, in lines stolen from Virgil, Ovid, and Tibullus, and some love verses, praised even now, because no longer read!

Da sacro cineri flores. Hic ille Maroni

Sincerus musa, proximus ut tumulo.

What! he! Sannazaro! said to approach Virgil as nearly in his poetry, as in the place of his interment! See what the madness of appearing witty, and the affectation of Antithesis, will produce! How many truths are sacrificed by them!

them! and what incongruous connections do they often form!—Sannazaro the rival of Virgil!

I would speak to you of the Catacombs of Naples, had I not mentioned those of Rome. The sensation one feels in them, is their only merit. These subterraneous places will always please an imagination affected with melancholy, which loves to approach the mansions of death, and feel the awful horrors of its darkness.—I can say nothing of the liquefaction of St. Januarius' blood, which, you know, is the operation of an annual miracle, for it is never done at this season; it would be too natural now: I shall only tell you, that this miracle has been discredited of late years, and, it is thought, it will soon entirely cease. Perhaps, very soon likewise, all over the universe, there will be but one miracle—the universe itself!

LETTER

LETTER CIVIL

NAPLES.

I HAVE seen, in the church of St. Januarius, the tomb of that unhappy Andrew the second, king of Naples, betrothed, when but seven years old, to Jane the first, and the victim, alas ! in the eighteenth year of his age, in the midst of his court, and at the eve of his coronation, of his young wife's perfidy, whose crime was suggested by love, hazarded by youth, extenuated by beauty, rendered legal by policy, and justified by the mighty power of gold, by a pontiff ; but such horrid treachery was never forgiven by nature, conscience, or Lewis II. king of Hungary, who ran, with a black standard in his hand, from the bottom of Germany to avenge his brother ; and, for the space of forty years, pursued, threatened, or kept a strict watch over, the queen's guilty head, which, grown white at last under the weight of sorrow and remorse, fell with the crown, still besmeared with the blood of the first of four husbands, under
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the sword of vengeance. This unfortunate Andrew was murdered at Averfa, and thrown out of a window. His nurse went in search of the body, which she found at the end of three days, and had it transported in the night, with the assistance of one of the canons, to St. Januarius' church, where the generous priest, after having shed over the ill-fated monarch the tears of a faithful subject, interred him by stealth, and afterwards erected this memorable monument at his own expence!

Since I spoke to you of Jane the first, and her husband's tomb, this is the place where I should likewise mention Jane the second, and the tomb of her lover in the church of San Giovanni. His name was John Caraccioli, and his destiny not unlike that of the celebrated Earl of Essex: he had the misfortune, like Essex, to please, when young, a queen rather in years; to listen to the voice of ambition, as a relief for the many irksome hours he was forced to spend in such a connection; to trust too much to the last attachment of a woman, and grievously to insult a queen, thinking he was only quarrelling with a mistress.

Like Essex, he stained the scaffold with his blood, shed by the order of a loving queen, who unluckily was all-powerful. Jane, on the other hand, died as Elizabeth did, soon after her favourite's death, consumed by love and regret, before that adored bloody head, which she saw night and day.

After leaving these tombs (it was in the evening), I went to take a walk along the coast of Posilipo, by the sea-side, before an antique palace of Jane, abandoned to the waves that lave it, and to time which destroys it. There I rested a while, seated on a stone, and listening by the moon-light to the dashing of the sea, which in hollow murmurs died away at my feet. I cannot describe to you the delicious, the profound melancholy which seized my heart at that instant. At the recollection of the tombs I had seen of the royal attachments, with their fatal catastrophes, and of the tragical name of Jane; at the sight of that ancient and desolate palace; at the elysian beams of the silver moon; at the coolness of the evening; and, in short, at the murmuring of the waves, which, running towards me, brake, and re-echoed in the interior parts

of the edifice, and among its ruins ; tears flood
trembling in my eyes, and, at last, some of
them would drop.

LETTER CVIII.

POMPEIA.

I AM astonished when I reflect that I am walking from house to house, from temple to temple, from street to street, in a town built two thousand years ago, inhabited by Romans, disinterred by a king of Naples, and perfectly preserved: such is Pompeia! Its inhabitants were asleep. On a sudden an impetuous wind rises, carries off part of the ashes that covered the top of Vesuvius, and drives them in whirlwinds through the air, over Pompeia. It was buried in a quarter of an hour, with Herculaneum, Sorrento, and a number of other towns and villages, with thousands of men—and Pliny! What a waking for the inhabitants! they heartily cursed, no doubt, Mount Vesuvius, its ashes, and its lava. Imprudent men, who had built Pompeia, at the foot of a volcano, upon its lava, and on its ashes! Indeed, men are very much like ants, which rebuild their hills in the same place, the very moment after an accident

cident had destroyed them. The ashes covered Pompeia. The descendants of those who perished in those ashes, have planted vines, fig, and mulberry trees, and poplars: the roofs of that town were orchards and fields.

As they were digging one day, the spade went a little deeper: they found some resistance; it was a town that resisted—it was Pompeia! The king of Naples ordered them to dig; but whether owing to a bad administration, to the indifference of the overseers, or to the air, which actually attacks and destroys these ruins the moment they are touched, they have not been able, in the space of thirty years, to uncover a third part of the town. When you arrive at Pompeia, the first object that strikes you, is the quarter allotted to the soldiers. Figure to yourself a long square of building, containing a vast number of detached rooms, the façade resting upon a portico that surrounds the whole. These columns are fluted, rather slender, and painted red, which has a very pretty effect. I visited several of those rooms. I found, in one of them, a mill that served the soldiers for grinding corn to make bread with; in another,

ther, a kind of press for mashing olives, and drawing the oil out of them. The first is very much like our coffee-mills; the second is composed of two grindstones, worked by the hand, in a large mortar round an iron-newel. I saw in a room, some irons that were still round the leg of a criminal; in another, heaps of bones; and in one, a gold collar. In quitting the soldiers quarters, the guide led me to the town.—What is the name of this street?—This pavement must soon be repaired. This rut, deeply marked by the waggons, by going over these heaps of lava, will overturn the carriages. I love these footpaths that are before all the houses. But where are the inhabitants? None to be seen in the shops! none in the streets! all the houses open!—Let us begin by visiting the houses on the right-hand.—This is not a private house, such a prodigious quantity of chiburgical instruments, proclaim a building analogous to their object. It is certainly the Pompeian surgeon's-hall. These houses are very small, and badly distributed; all the apartments are detached—but yet what a neatness! what elegance! In every one of them an interior porch, a Mosaic pavement, a square col-
nade

nade; and in the middle a cistern to receive the water that runs from the top; in every one some stoves and baths, and every where paintings *al fresco*, in a most exquisite taste, and on the most elegant grounds.—Did Raphael come here to copy his inimitable Arabescs?

Let us go to the other side of the street. These houses are three stories high, resting on the lava, which has formed here a kind of mountain, on the declivity of which the inhabitants built. The third story communicates on high with a street, and the lowest with a garden.

Let us go down this stair-case.—This colonade round the garden, is extremely agreeable; one may walk in it during the heat of the sun, or in rainy weather.—What do I see in this room!—ten heads of dead persons.—These unhappy beings ran under shelter hither, or, very likely, could not save themselves. This is the head of a young child; its parents cannot be far off.—

Let us go up stairs—the heart is not at ease in this place. Let us enter the temple for a few minutes, since they left the gates open. Who is that god at the bottom of this niche? he is the god of Silence, who commands it by a sign

orator

with his finger, shewing the goddess Iris in the *Sacrarium*. The porch presents three altars.—It was here the victims were slain; along that channel flowed the blood, and went into that basin in the middle, whence it dropped over the heads of the priests. This small room, near the altar, is, without doubt, the sacristy: the priests were wont to purify themselves in that cistern.

Let us now go to the sanctuary; it is very small—How many columns? Six:—they are likewise small. But how elegant this pediment! Why these two doors at each corner of the altar? Oh! I perceive it now.—It was through this passage the impostors crept, and penetrating between the altar and the wall, made the divinity speak. Alas! poor people! you have been always duped then! Come and see how they regaled themselves, at your expence, with a splendid supper! The cloth is not yet taken off. They have eaten some fresh eggs, and drunk some good wine.—Here are some inscriptions—*Popidi ambleati, Corelia celsa*. It is a monument erected to the memory of those who made offerings to Isis, that is, to her priests, who

who call them *pious*, a synonymous term for *dupes*.

In quitting the temple of Isis, I passed before that of —. You certainly guess what temple I mean, since I do not mention the word. The temple of Priapus is quite near that of Isis. The ancients had, on this subject, other ideas, and, consequently other manners than ours.— But I cannot be far from Aufidius' country seat, for behold the gates of the town! See the burying place of Diomedes' family.

Let us rest a while under these porticos, where the philosophers used to sit—I was not mistaken, and the classics did not deceive me: Aufidius's country seat is charming—the paintings *al fresco* delightful. How attracting these blue grounds! With what oeconomy, and, consequently, with what taste, have they distributed the figures in the pannels! Flora has woven that wreath herself!—But who has painted that Venus?—that Adonis?—that young Narcissus in the bath?—Look at that Mercury. It cannot be a week since these charming figures were painted.—I love this portico

round the garden; and round the portico, this square and covered cellar.—Is it Falernian wine that these *amphoras* contain? How many consuls since the wine was made?—It grows late.—This is the hour for the entertainments. Let us go to the covered theatre—it is shut.—Let us go to the uncovered one—it is shut.—I do not know whether I have given you a right idea of Pompeia.

LETTER

LETTER CIX.

NAPLES.

WHAT pity it is that this country should be ill-governed! This is the general exclamation of all travellers, when, with a look they embrace this country from the tops of the hills, which crown it; whether from the summit of Posilipo, the brow of Mount Vesuvius, the retreat of the Hyeronimites at Renella, or the convent of the Carthusians. It was in this convent that an answer was given, containing deep reflection, and profound thought.

A traveller, struck with the glorious and magnificent prospect of the country, exclaimed before one of the monks—*here happiness must dwell*—yes, replied the pensive recluse, *for the strangers who visit us*—But I prefer the prospect one enjoys from Renella. What an en-

K. 6.

chanting

chanting view ! Vernet, Robert, Delille, Rou-
cher, St. Pierre ! the prospect is worthy of your
pencils !—Rivers, valleys, hills, forests, and
mountains ! A volcano, the sea, the town
where Tasso was born, and that where Virgil
died !

What a wonderful assemblage of fresh, lively,
and beauteous colours !—such as those with
which nature paints the universe—the most
sparkling gold of the stars ; the richest and the
most animated enamel of flowers ; the most
blazing flames of volcanos ; the most azure
waves of the sea ; the darkest blue of the sky,
and the purest rays of the sun !

Add to this admirable display of engaging
objects, all that the hours can supply to, or re-
trench from, the rich landscape, as in their
flight, and regulated course, they are traversing
this beautiful country—all those lights and
shades, all those variations, in short, with which
each of them, taking the pencil of nature in
her turn, touches and modifies the globe ; and
then—you will not be able to draw the enchant-

ing

ing prospect. How cool the morning! how brilliant the day! The evening—how still and delightfully calm! and the night—how inviting to repose and love!

LETTER

LETTER CX.

AND THE LAST.

NAPLES.

I EMBARKED yesterday before dawn, and went to visit, with the sun, the beautiful islands scattered in the gulph of Naples.

I saw the sun emerging from the sea, and separating the heavens from the waves—the heavens seemed majestically rising, and the waves widely extending their domain. One would have thought that Phœbus had been reposing during the night in the midst of them. I saw him darting his rays on the top of Posilipo, running over the promontory of Miseno, sparkling upon the curling waves that surround the islands of Procida, Ischia and Nisida; then I perceived him towards the horizontal boundary, where the sky rests on the sea, glancing his soft genial rays over Baja and Pozzoli, and the gulph which separates them, over Monte
Novo,

Novo, formed in one night by the eruption of a volcano; and Monte Barbaro, where once ripened the Falernian grape; over the elysian fields, the solemn remains of Cuma, and the ruins of seven cities, which flourished, in happier times, on these delightful shores.

Stay thy course for a moment, bright god of day!—let me run over all these enchanting spots, which nature seems to have created on purpose to relieve and recreate the Romans after the conquest of the world; or to make them forget it, in these delightful retreats!

Here I am, with the foaming sea, on the second portico of the amphitheatre of Misena. After viewing it attentively, I ascend hastily the upper one; thence I contemplate the steps the waves have been making, these eight hundred years, to enter this amphitheatre. How many ages has nature then to herself for completing her revolutions!—I descend at last, and wander, with dry feet, over that astonishing pool deservedly called *Piscina Ammirabile*; that immense reservoir, supported at intervals by so many enormous pillars, which present,
by

by their elevation, their mass, their number, their indestructible cement, their majestic vaults, and their ruins, a striking resemblance of the foundations of the Roman empire. I passed before three rows of tombs raised one above another, and half opened to the light by the powerful hand of time.

The bodies of the inhabitants of Misena were deposited then on the borders of these waves, separated by a canal from the rest of the sea, which, deprived of all motion, becomes there black, hideous and foetid; it actually flows no more, it lives no longer, and is a perfect *dead sea*. Behold the *elysian fields*!—how silent!—how tranquil!—how cool!—how delightful is it to pass a pensive evening under these thick shades, and in these solitary paths!—But see the infernal regions not far off!

Wonderful contrast! How faithfully does Tibullus express it in his beautiful lines, which these awful mansions recall to the mind!—Peruse them again, and be struck with horror at the description he gives. After quitting the *elysian fields*, I went to see the remains of the
tem-

temples of Venus Genitrix, Diana, and Mercury; the ruins of Nero's baths, and numberless country seats; of stoves, where health was restored, and of baths, where breathed voluptuousness and pleasure; but above all, these delightful shores, so fatal to modesty, and so favourable to love, where the zephyrs, the sea, the air—all contributed to relax the mind, and the heart, from the severe yoke of thought; where, amidst the voluptuous accents of voices and effeminate instruments, intermixed with the murmurs of gentle zephyrs, and the sweet notes of the feathered songsters, were dying away the sounds of warlike trumpets, celebrating every where the victories of Rome, and soliciting new ones; where, in short, while generals, consuls, and emperors were singing, dancing and sighing, all the nations were wiping their tears, and breathing for a moment, in peace.

Yes, in the midst of these ruins, even in the condition these shores are in at present, I can easily conceive, that when these temples were entire, when the festivals and mysteries of Venus were celebrating in them, and sacrifices

were

were offered to Mercury; when these various mineral waters, these fives, these baths, these resorts of voluptuousness, health and strength, were incessantly frequented; when all the theatres were filled with the most distinguished Romans, and the most renowned beauties of Italy; when this gulph was covered with purple sails, flowing streamers, and masts curiously decked with flowers, continually conveying backward and forward frolicksome and brilliant youths, on a sea bestrewed with roses; when, in short, at the hour the sun rapidly descends from the heavens into the sea—at that hour, which is the most inviting of all the evening hours, to soft endearments, and to dalliance; for all then here abandoned themselves to voluptuousness and pleasure, agreeably to the charms of the evening and the place—yes, I can conceive, that then Cicero might be reproached for having a country-house at Baja; that Seneca, when travelling, was afraid of sleeping there more than one night; and that Propertius suspected the fidelity of his Cynthia, the moment she reached that fatal, bewitching spot.

Even

Even I find this place, though so much changed by volcanos and time, though desart, and covered with hanging and falling ruins, every instant disappearing under the waves, —yes, I find it still dangerous: methinks the air has retained something of its ancient corruption, as yet unpurified; the heart begins to feel the forcible influence of it—in this aspect, and in this situation, the thoughts are incessantly rendered more flexible by that vague and light shade, spreading a sable veil over the last glimpses of day, in the heavens, on the sea, and on the summits of the hills and the trees; but above all by the silence, which every moment diffuses itself on this coast, and from the bosom of which rises by degrees the affecting concert of the evening, composed of the melancholy sound of oars dashing the foaming waves, of the distant bleating of flocks, scattered over the mountains; of the hollow murmurs of the sea, expiring on the rocks; of the rustling of the leaves, where the zephyrs never rest; of all those insensible sounds, in short, which, extended far off in the heavens, on the water, and on the earth, form at this instant an uncertain

uncertain whisper — a kind of melodious breathing of reposing nature! — Let us quit this dangerous shore, and re-embark for Naples. — After to-morrow we shall return thither.



F. I N I S.

